The Pulpit

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

James Armstrong:
A Religion for Today

James Wm. Morgan • Certainty

Thomas H. Britton • Saints, Sinners, Simpletons

John S. Jury • Struggle of the Giants

C. Ellis Nelson • Choosing a God

John F. Anderson, Jr. • Me, My Neighbor and God

DAVID A. MacLENNAN • THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD

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The Pulpit

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PULPIT POST

Diogenes, Swing Your Lantern This Way

SIR: I am thinking of placing a regular order for The Pulpit. I would be most grateful if you would let me know whether I would be at liberty without infringing copyrights to write out the sermons and preach them to my congregation or to write them out, making alterations where I thought fit, and then deliver them without having to quote the source, provided, of course, that they were never printed for sale. Yours faithfully,

(Name withheld)

Nothing New

SIR: The article "An Experiment in Ministerial Training" in the July issue of The Pulpit vividly demonstrates the need for better communication between churches and denominations. What the author Mr. Thomas refers to as an experiment, namely, an internship program as a part of theological training, has been an integral part of the theological education of pastors in the Augustana Lutheran Church since 1934. It passed the experimental stage years ago.

RAYMOND W. HEDBERG
Arlington Hills Lutheran Church
St. Paul, Minn.

Reductio ad Absurdum

SIR: I do not recall the magazine, though I believe it was The Pulpit [It was. May, 1960], or the writer of the article [John R. Bodo], but I do remember that he tried to set up reasons why preachers should use the time-honored prayers of the prayer book instead of their own extemporaneous and often repetitive and monotonous prayers. The reasons given I immediately concluded applied equally well to the sermons as to the prayers. Why not, indeed, read the great sermons of our outstanding pulpit orators instead of the present mediocre sermons of mediocre ministers? And perhaps another step in the same direction as to the choir. Why not records of some of our outstanding choirs during the anthem period?

This method of reasoning is called reductio ad absurdum; and often, as I believe in this case, is fairly good proof that the major premise is at fault. No, rather let us hear the testimony and prayers of devoted men. Perhaps preachers should give more thought to the prayers in order that they may truly pray for the congregation as their pastor.

WILLIAM M. WINANS
Waterbury, Conn.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXI SEPTEMBER 1960 No. 9

The Decline of the Clergy, Part One

IN 1907 P. T. Forsyth lamented the decline of the clergy in words which are now familiar to all of us: "The authority of the preacher was once supreme. He bearded kings, and bent senates to his word. He determined policies, ruled fashions, and prescribed thought." Earlier, Frederick W. Robertson in one of his letters deplored the limited scope and lessened power of the pulpit: "Once it was newspaper, schoolmaster, theological treatise, a stimulant to good works, historical lecture, metaphysics, etc., all in one. Now these are partitioned out to different officers, and the pulpit is no more the pulpit of three centuries back." The condition which they discerned is now upon us in full force, but we cannot share their regret.

It is not the decline of clerical power that we should lament nor the narrowing of the minister's scope of influence. The diminishing of the minister's authority has been salutary for the progress of mankind to the exact extent that it represents a repudiation of clericalism. So far as the reduced sway of the pulpit is concerned, the less it is tempted in our day to be newspaper, schoolmaster, etc., the more hopeful we can be that it will find energy, insight and devotion for its true and commissioned purpose.

To be sure, the position of the clergy in western, democratic lands is no longer one of power or even of prestige. The privileges which it still retains in our modern society — exemption from military service, commercial discounts, tax leniencies — demonstrate rather than dispute the clergy's declining power. For these are merely residual courtesies, inherited but now meaningless and unnecessary customs, or political deferences invested for equivalent return. These perquisites, to which the minister is apt to point as an indication of his importance to society, are nothing more than the conditioned reflexes of an aging culture; the conditions which brought them into being and gave them significance have passed; the reflexes remain.

Such patronage was originally granted to the Protestant clergy not as the response either to a just demand or a mendicant plea but rather as an aid and an incentive in producing a "soul" for society. It was reckoned a worthy investment which society could not only afford to make but which it was wise to make in its own best interest. So long as the parson was the representative person of his day, it could be claimed that the patronage of society was rightfully his. But it is a long fall from that high and perilous perch to the day when the minister is, out of sheer and senseless deference to custom, called in to open a "Hotel Boosters" convention with a "not too long prayer."

True, the clergy still retains to a rather surprising degree the respect of the average layman. Demonstrations of this regard, however, are often of that quality which indicates respect without admiration. If he is a man, and a discerning one, he is apt to be more embarrassed than flattered by demonstrations of that kind of respect.

However, while it is unbecoming and unwise to mourn the fading of clerical authority as such, it must be noted that the loss of clerical authority has been paralleled by the decline of another authority — that which the clergy represents; and the lessening of ministerial influence has signalized not merely the loss of his personal influence — which is expendable — but also the lapse of that influence which for so long spoke through the clergy and which without him has little voice. The waning of his official power and personal prestige could be lightly regarded were it not for the fact that it is symptomatic of a real and tragic loss of public confidence in the authority of the gospel. Unfortunately, the fall of the prophet cannot be easily separated from the decline of the prophecy and it is exceedingly difficult to know which is cause and which effect.

The clergy may now be merely a symbol but the treatment given a symbol is also symbolic. The final and usually unrecognized authority in human affairs is the preacher's authority; that authority is not the preacher nor is it the exclusive property of the preacher nor is it the mind of the preacher. It is the authority which grips the preacher. It is the authority traditionally represented by the clergy, the word of God in Christ. That being so, the decline of the clergy, however we may view it, portends an unhappy day for the church and for man. As ministers of Christ we must recover an awareness of our identity as his ministers. We are privileged to say, even as he did, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." KYLE HASELDEN

A Religion for Today

By James Armstrong

NEVER has America been more religious! Sixty per cent of our people are identified with churches and synagogues. Our president prays in public and insists upon reference to God in our pledge of allegiance, on our currency and in our state papers. Billy Graham and Fulton Sheen have preached to more people than any other men in history. Norman Vincent Peale has written for mass audiences undreamed of by earlier churchmen. The church is no longer considered an "accessory"; it has come to be "standard equipment" in the American way of life.

And yet — crime soars, mental illness skyrockets, juvenile delinquency frightens us, racial violence erupts across the land, war still has its wild-eyed apostles and greed continues to damn the human soul. *In the midst of our religiosity we seem to be losing the battle for survival and salvation.* It is quite obvious that the religion we have is not doing the job. While church membership increases and national piety becomes official, the human scene gets worse. What kind of religion do we need for a world like ours?

Joining in the Search

In this 20th century the church must join man's search for truth. Traditionally the church is a know-it-all. Absolute Truth has been revealed to it. It belongs to God. The sacraments transmit his grace; the Bible contains his Word; the creeds define his nature. It's as simple as that. What more do we need? Apparently, we need a great deal more! If sacraments, bibles and creeds could save the world, it would have been saved long ago. Meaningful as they are, the great symbols of our religious tradition are not enough. And if we pretend that they exhaust all spiritual reality, our smug and shallow arrogance will alienate us from modern man.

Twentieth-century man stands in fear and trembling. The harsh facts of contemporary living have destroyed his illusions. He is surrounded by sensualism, immersed in materialism and rendered impotent by moral flabbiness. The voice of God is but a haunting echo out of the past. This man wants to find truth, but he does not know what it is. He wants to be good, but he does not know what that means. Of whom can he ask the questions that he needs to ask? Where can he find legitimate expression for his agonizing search for meaning? Can it be the church? Can the church be sufficiently humble to welcome into its midst the hurt cynic and the earnest doubter, the uncertain stranger who in his naked honesty may help the church recover its redemptive vitality in a waylost culture? The German philosopher Karl Jaspers has said, "Alone I sink into gloomy isolation — only in community with others can I be revealed in the act of mutual discovery." If the church is willing to accept its humanity, even as it has gloried in its divinity, it can become a real community of "mutual discovery." It was our Lord who said, "The truth shall make you free." It follows then that we become more and more free as we honestly and fearlessly seek new truth.

In New Orleans there is an organization called "Discussions Unlimited." One night in March "Discussions Unlimited" featured the appearance of Dr. Charles C. Tansill, a professor of history at Georgetown University. Dr. Tansill was extremely critical of our foreign policy and our State Department. After his address, Dr. John Snell, professor of history at Tulane, took sharp issue with Tansill's views and defended our foreign policy. He was shouted down, was not permitted to continue. It hardly needs to be said, but "Discussions Unlimited" is not the place to refuse to listen to an opposing point of view. Apparently, at least on the night of March 24, the discussion was *very* limited.

I am saying that if the church is of God it has nothing to fear from an honest, sincere search for purpose and truth. Let questions be asked. Let conflicting points of view be presented. Let us in all humility acknowledge the fact that we do not

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In the letter which accompanied this sermon, the author stated, "Though the sermon does not reflect present preoccupation with theology, it says some things that I feel need desperately to be said." We agree and hope our readers do.

ow everything. Even as we find warm security history and tradition, let us dare to ask and ek and knock in the presence of an uncertain ture. Jesus never put a lid on the minds of his llowers. Rather, speaking to Philip, he said, "I sure you that the man who believes in me will greater things than I have done." Believing in that the Nazarene represented, let us join all hers — the sciences, the arts, all kinds of condi-ons of men everywhere — as they seek new and eater expressions of truth and life. If we fail in is we shall be left behind, straggling and choking the dust stirred up by the movement of hu-anity, wondering why our neat little blueprints ere not accepted.

Confirming Life's Sacredness

The religion of today must confirm the sacred-ess of life. A writer in *The New Yorker* magazine cently confessed his disappointment in the census. [e said that he had his pencils sharpened; he was rimed to tell all. And then "what they wanted to now was if our house was heated with steam or ot air." These were some of the questions he anted to answer: "Do you, in fact, trust in God? . . . Do you relish the thought of Outer pace? . . . Can you still read a little Latin? . . . Iow often a month are you happy? (Once? Six imes? Always? Never?)"

The writer went on to say, "When Mr. Eisen-ower's successor sits down at his desk next Janu-ry, we want a census they can take to him saying ot 'Here. Look at the number of semi-detached lwellings' but 'Here. These are the people you're upposed to lead.' "[1] In our day gimmicks, gadgets, hings, have well-nigh driven human personality rom the center of the state. What we have seems nore important to most of us than what we are. Religion, therefore, must affirm the sacredness of ersonal life. Julian Huxley has said, "The re-igion of the future must have as its basis the con-ciousness of sanctity in existence — in common hings, in events of human life."

This, of course, is the heart and soul of Albert Schweitzer's witness. Sometimes he carries his rev-erence for life to unusual extremes. It is said that when Adlai Stevenson was visiting him at Lam-baréné some time ago, a large mosquito alighted on Schweitzer's arm. Stevenson promptly swatted it. "You shouldn't have done that," the doctor said sharply. "That was my mosquito. Besides, it wasn't necessary to call out the Sixth Fleet to deal with him." Ridiculous? Not necessarily. When you see this principle take an Albert Schweitzer away from civilization so that he might make a gift of himself to the lowliest among men, then you begin to understand its power to save. When you see it given expression in his urgent plea to call a halt to irresponsible experimentation with nuclear weapons lest the human race be contaminated by fall-out, you begin to understand its relevance. Unless religion today preaches judgment of those who would ravage, destroy and annihilate, to those who make a plaything of our ultimate destiny, it betrays its affirmation of life. One of the nation's leading editors, Norman Cousins, says, "History is willing to overlook almost anything — errors, paradoxes, personal weaknesses or faults — if only a man will give enough of himself to others." Our religion must lead us to do this. The religion that refuses to give itself away has no word for our problem.

[1] *The New Yorker*, April 16, 1960. Used by permission.

Passionate Involvement

If religion is to serve our world it must become passionately involved in life. Again, Norman Cousins once asked, "Has the Church failed?" In replying to his own question he wrote, "If the Church has failed it is because it has failed to involve itself in the human situation." It is not enough to pray the right prayers, sing the right hymns and say the right creeds, if all the while we ignore the pulsating demands of life that throb around us.

I understand that one or two — only one or two — of our members have criticized me because, though I have never visited in their homes, I have gone to the home of a nearby Negro couple who had a cross burned in their yard. "Why doesn't he take care of his own members?" they have asked. Let me measure my words very carefully and say them very clearly. First, if any member of this church is ever in need, I am as close as the nearest telephone. If any one of you has cause for me to be in your home, you let me know; I'll be there. I am your ministerial servant and will come any hour of the day or night. And second, I will also respond to any other plea for help that seems legitimate. If the church and its ministers shy away from desperate human need, fearing controversy, embracing sinful compromise and tragic caution, then God help the church. It will be no different in kind or quality from the snobbish club or the frightened and exclusive league.

It was to the religious leaders of his day that Jesus was referring when he told his hearers, "You must not imitate their lives. . . . And," he added, "you must not let people call *you* 'leaders'; you have only one leader, Christ! The only 'superior' among you is the one who serves . . . others." Jesus cried out against the kind of religion that prayed long and pious prayers but studiously ignored the hunger, the thirst, the grief, the pain that cowered on its own doorstep. And never forget it: it was religion — the wrong kind of religion — that put Jesus to death.

George Matheson, a Scottish saint of yesteryear, wrote in his *Studies of the Portrait of Christ*:

> In the culture of the past, Thou, Christ, art the only modern. No one else felt the need and sympathy of man for man. . . . Thou hast broken the barriers of

caste! Thou hast reached the last motive of charity, which is the right of the hungry for bread. Thou hast outrun one philanthropy. Thou hast anticipated our benevolence. Thou hast modeled our infirmaries and orphanages. Thou hast sketched our asylums. Thou hast devised our homes of refuge . . . Thou hast asserted the sacredness of infant life. Thou hast given a hand to the climbing steps of woman. At the end of all our progress we meet Thee.[2]

If our religion is to meet the needs of today's world it must have at its very center our eternal contemporary, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus did not selfishly find refuge in a house of worship for his personal inspiration and edification and that alone. Rather, as a Man of compassion, he burst free from the shackles of tradition and conformity to give himself to people where they lived. He involved himself in the human situation, a choice that led to a cross. But by taking up the burden of his brothers he changed the course of human history forever. True to the spirit of the Master we of this hour must be concerned not so much with what we think and say about God, as with what we do about man! We serve God by serving one another. The apostle John with devastating insight wrote, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." The religion of today must soothe. It must comfort. It must encourage and sustain. But if it has not courageous and compassionate love, it is nothing.

[2] From the book, *Studies of the Portrait of Christ*, by George Matheson. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ FROM "A Letter to a Young Clergyman," in the year 1721: I should likewise have been glad if you had applied yourself a little more to the study of the English language than I fear you have done; the neglect whereof is one of the most general defects among the scholars of this kingdom, who seem not to have the least conception of a style, but run on a flat kind of phraseology, often mingled with barbarous terms and expressions peculiar to the nation. Neither do I perceive that any person either finds or acknowledges his wants upon this head, or in the least desires to have them supplied. Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style. — *Jonathan Swift*

✚ BUT WE have become "mealy-mouthed" in speaking about punishment. Punishment! Why! the whole creation is grim with it. It is the one religious doctrine that has been buttressed by every discovery. . . . Use fear, gentlemen, healthy fear: and preach "sin." Sin in its protean forms is the world's big fact. It is so big that it takes a Cross with a Christ to measure it. — *James Black*

✚ OLA Elizabeth Winslow says in *Jonathan Edwards* that people came away from Whitefield's sermons talking about "the great Mr. Whitefield" but that they came away from hearing Jonathan Edwards at Enfield asking, "What must I do to be saved?"

✚ PREACHERS are born and not made, but they are born raw. — *Robert McCracken*

✚ THURSO [the village] put iron into my blood. I preached better than I have ever done, not because I love preaching less but because Caithness [the shire] loved preaching more. — *George H. Morrison*

✚ EVERY good sermon is in a sense a conversation between the preacher and the individual people with whom he stands in a special relationship by reason of his installation as their pastor. — *Morgan Phelps Noyes*

✚ A STORY can be safely used only if it has become an integral part of the preacher's own thought, and if it is presented in unmistakable connection with the general thought it exemplifies. — *H. Grady Davis*

(From *Design for Preaching*, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1958)*

✚ I WOULD flee the pulpit if I only could. Often when the church officer is bringing in the Bible I think of escaping by the back door. You will not believe me, but it's true. And when you are setting yourselves down in your luxurious seats I am holding on by the banister behind me and am pleading with God that He would not cast me away from His presence but would uphold me with His free spirit. And while the organist welcomes you in with sweet music I am staggering in with the prayer, "O sprinkle the pulpit, and the preacher and the sermon, with the peace speaking and the power giving blood." — *Alexander Whyte*

✚ NOTHING is more characteristic of Protestantism than the importance it attaches to preaching. — *Wilhelm Pauck*

(From *The Ministry in Historical Perspective*, Harper, 1956)

✚ LANGUAGE is not an abstract construction of the learned, or of dictionary makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground. — *Walt Whitman*

* Used by permission.

The Good News of God

By David A. MacLennan

. . . the glorious gospel of the blessed God with hich I have been entrusted. 1 Timothy 1:11.

GLORIOUS good news of the blessed God." Are we sure that is what it is with which we ave been entrusted? You may recall reading the eport of the conversation between George Mac-eod of the Iona Community and the communist isitor who dropped in for a chat and free cigarettes hen Dr. MacLeod was minister of Govan Parish hurch, Glasgow. Said the communist, "You folk ave got it; if only you knew that you had it, and only you knew how to begin to say it." We have ot it. Has it got us?

Communicating Intelligibly

A Professor Hodge said that our task as am-assadors of Christ is to make the gospel "visible, ntelligible, desirable." Let me begin with the econd requirement. We are to make the Good News of God *intelligible.* "Intelligible," says the reacher's second most useful tool, "means capable f being understood." Have you ever suspected hat highly intelligent persons are not always in-elligible? One of the persistent despairs of preach-ng is the discovery that so often when we think we ave told the story simply as to a little child, a rownup misunderstood what we thought we said. Recall the Oxford University verger who walked ome with an Anglican bishop after a college hapel sermon on the text, "The fool hath said in is heart, There is no God." Said the verger houghtfully, "Begging your pardon, my lord, I don't agree with you. I think there is a God."

To be intelligible in communicating the gospel does not mean that we reduce our expression of it to the few hundred simple words of basic English. It does mean that when we use technical terms, theological shorthand, we define our terms without pedantic patronage. "Existential tension," "de-mythologizing," "realized eschatology," "truncated ontology," could be impressive but meaningless. Well-balanced ambiguities may have their place in academic discourse but not in preaching. As many have rediscovered, the great words of the biblical vocabulary need to be retranslated into contempo-rary speech. It is not only because the widely de-plored scriptural illiteracy is so prevalent; it is because the once valuable coin of faith's currency needs to be reminted. Word study of such terms as grace, love, hope, faith, not to speak of justification, salvation, sanctification, evoke gratifying and ap-preciative response in lay listeners. To make the gospel intelligible we ourselves must know its con-tent. Happily kerygmatic theology has come into its own again. Some of the elements of the original message may cause uneasiness in our minds, but at least we know the core of the "good news entrusted to us."

The dreams and desires of the people of Israel, selected by God himself to transmit his truth, have been fulfilled. The fulfillment has come in Jesus of Nazareth who is Messiah. He lived a few brief years in Palestine. He "went about doing good and executing mighty works by the power of God." He was "crucified according to the purpose of God." He "was raised by God from the dead." He is "exalted by God and given the name above every name. He will come again for the judgment and restoration of all things. Therefore all you who hear the message repent and be baptized." The glorious Good News of God is that he has "visited and redeemed his people" in Jesus Christ.

But, as Chesterton said, the world is full of people who know the last word about everything and the first word about nothing. The first word about everything — life, love, time, eternity, our relationships with one another, our eternal destiny — is Christ. Archbishop William Temple once re-marked that the heart of the Christian faith is neither being good nor doing good — these are by-products — but the heart of it is our knowledge and love of a Person, because of whom we can be and do what we could not by ourselves.

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To many Jesus of Nazareth is a lovely figure back in history; to others in our society Jesus is an irrelevance. His ideals seem woven of starry, unreachable hopes. He himself seems to be a prisoner of his day and therefore unable to help modern man cope with the complex problems of the so-called soaring sixties. Thus we must make Christ who is the Good News of God intelligible. We must help him show himself not only as completely human in his Palestinian life — no demigod, no angel masquerading as a man; we must let him confront our people and those who would be his people as "the Man of God's own choosing." For the church in its main branches has insisted, with the support of the Scriptures of the Faith, that Jesus is Lord. Therefore our primary affirmation is that in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, God himself came, and is coming, and will come, into our human situation. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and a 20th-century man can behold his glory, the glory of "God's presence and his very self, and essence, all divine." Was it President Nathan M. Pusey of Harvard who said, "In the depth of every misery, Jesus put a face"? That is why on the face of Jesus on the Cross, men and women, boys and girls, have perceived the face of God and in the love of Jesus the blazing love of God.

When we try to make the glorious Good News of God intelligible, we go further. We say that something was done in the life of Jesus; in the death of Jesus; in God's raising Jesus from the dead, that had to be done if the intolerable burden of our failure and guilt (the Bible uses a plain, somewhat unpopular three-letter word "sin" for it) was to be taken from us. When we could no longer "take it" — our deep sickness, our haunting memories, our hurts done to others and done by others to us — God "took" it into himself in the Son of his love on Calvary. We preach Christ crucified, but we never would unless we could also preach Christ risen, and living in and among his own in his body, the church.

Hence we say, as a perceptive English layman put it, "the Gospel is the Good News of Original Sin." That is, sin is original in that it is the origin of our deepest sickness and wrongness. The Good News is that God has acted in Christ to absorb the power of the sin. We are, said P. T. Forsyth, not just wayward sheep or prodigals, we are rebels caught with weapons in our hands. Only the seeking, untiring love of God personalized in Jesus our Lord can turn us from rebels into responsible members of God's family, and into responsible citizens of God's Kingdom. Sin is no illusion, but stark, terrible and often terrifying reality. When we look at our own nation, our own community, through newspaper headlines, and most dismaying of all, when we take an honest look at our own hearts, we know that our forefathers were not wrong when they spoke of total depravity. If they meant every child of God is totally depraved, we beg to differ and take our stand with the New Testament. But if they meant that the sickness affects the total population, they were right.

The Good News of God makes realistic analysis of our predicament. From a profoundly pessimistic view of our human nature and of our follies, it resolves the contradiction between our godlikeness and our demonic tendencies with the glorious Good News of divine salvation. Remember the Old Testament word translated "salvation" and its meaning? — "victory in battle." People in America, in our world, could use victory in the battle against injustice, greed, hatred and all the other ugly members of the devil's brood that make for our estrangement from God, from our neighbors and from our true selves. Then we recall the New Testament word translated "salvation," and we thank God that he rescues us from our enemies, delivers us from the "sickness unto death" which is sin, and gives us health and freedom through Christ Jesus our Savior.

Yes, we have got it, if only we knew that we had it, and if only we could tell it — clearly, persuasively, relevantly.

Making the Gospel Manifest

The Good News of God includes more than these elements. Integral to Christian faith is membership in the living Church. No longer do interpreters of the Bible accept the pleasant description of the church as an institution of the ideal, a society of like-minded people intent upon doing good. The church of Christ is God's new Israel, the people of God, the body of Christ. By God's grace when we confide ourselves to Christ we are incorporated into his body, we are accepted within the redemptive community which is an extension of the very personality of the Lord of life and history. This is why we can say without sectarian pretension or ecclesiastical exclusiveness what a father of the early church said, "outside the Church [there is] no salvation." As ancient seekers and finders of the great God met him in the tabernacles of the Most High, in the holy temple, so men and women and boys and girls today find God and are found by God in the temple of his Spirit, in Christ unseen, living, reigning. To be "in Christ" means surely to be in communion with him. The Nicene Creed may be an uncongenial thought form for 20th-century men. It is an antique but majestic symbol of the church's faith. In the age of astronauts and of anxiety, of space ships and of new forms of lostness we can say — who are not among "the beat, the bearded and the bored — we "believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church."

But, said our theologian, we are to make the gospel not only intelligible, but *visible and desirable*. Dr. J. B. Phillips has translated a verse from

Peter in this way: "It is for you now to demonate the goodness of Christ." You and I and our mpanions in Christ make visible the Good News we demonstrate that we are the people of God. ow do we do this? By manifesting what the Rermers called the notes or marks of the living urch. These marks surely include unity in what atters, oneness in him whom we believe and try ways more effectively to serve; holiness — wholeneness and Christlike love — which is infinitely ore than piety or negative goodness among those ho are truly partisans of Christ. To be a partisan Christ, which according to an eminent biblical holar is the meaning of the name "Christian," is be an apostle, one who is sent. The church is ie unseen Lord "on mission." Any congregation God's people is apostolic, not only when it connues in the apostles' teaching, but when it makes isible the grace and Spirit of him whose witness nd instrument it is. Obviously, to engage in hrist's mission to others, to have the congregaon itself "operational" in evangelism means exeriments and adventures which sometimes seem ncompatible with our dignity and traditional rocedure. I have discovered a new occupational isease of churchmen: hardening of the categories.)r. Melvin E. Wheatley says that this hazard to piritual health shows itself in stereotypes about egions, persons, groups: "He's nothing but a darn 'ankee." "What do you expect of a Southerner on ivil rights?" "He's one of those filthy rich." Says my riend, "To stereotype an individual in some preonceived category and to presume this to define he full limits of his potential and worth is not only o libel him with a label, but also to downgrade ne's own capacity as a human being."

Hardening of the categories can also show itself n reluctance or inability to try new methods "if y any means we may win some" to our Lord. Granted, methods and organization may become a orm of idolatry, but divine grace must have chanels through which to flow. As the Anglican reorted to the Pentecostal brother who said, "A body without the Spirit is a corpse," "a Spirit without a ody is a spook!" Let a minister, his elders, the hurch school staff and a nucleus of other partisans f Christ think through the glorious Good News of he Blessed God. Let them be faithful and active upils in the school of prayer. Let them examine very worthy plan of enlisting others in Christ's ervice and use the plan which offers maximum ossibilities for a continuing crusade of commitment. Such transmitters of the Good News may e sure that the Good News will become visible, nd to at least a significant number, highly desirable.

Dr. J. B. Phillips' translation of the New Testament may be, as some biblical scholars tend to hink, more of a paraphrase than a literal translation into modern speech. It is certainly an inspired paraphrase in many instances. One of the most inspired is the prologue to John's Gospel:

> At the beginning God expressed himself. That personal expression, that word, was with God and was God, and he existed with God from the beginning. . . So the word of God became a human being and lived among us.

Reverently it must be said that even as the divine Word became flesh in Jesus Christ, all who are "in Christ" must let their "flesh," their personalities in relationship with others become the living Word. God who was "in Christ personally reconciling the world to himself" (Phillips' version of 2 Corinthians 5:19), "has commissioned us with the message of reconciliation."

"How can we make them want what we have, and desire what has us and makes such a world of difference to us?" Young preachers have asked their teachers this question. By disciplined study, by biblical preaching which is also relevant and clear, by creating as worthy an environment of worship in which the ministry of Word and Sacrament may be exercised — these are clues to the answer. Nevertheless, is there any preaching more eloquent, more memorable and more influential than that of a life lived "in Christ"? To us as to Francis of Assisi long ago a Stranger may say, "Thy people set great store by thee. I pray thee, live the life."

To have pastor and people, leaders and followers, *friends* to all the children of God, in the grace of the supreme Friend, is surely the best thing men and women and children can know. For a church to be a society of the friends of Jesus and therefore a society of the friends of rich and poor, learned and ignorant, good and bad, Anglo-Saxon and non-Anglo-Saxon, is to make the Good News of God in Christ intelligible, visible and desirable.

A Prayer

MAY we whose thoughts form slowly and whose words do not leap into sentences, still approach thee confidently in prayer, O God. We cannot pray glibly but we do revere thee. Prayers do not come trippingly on the tongue but deep love fills our hearts. Our language is laggard but our trust is immediate; our commitment outruns our speech.

We thank thee that back of prayerful words are reverence, faith and affection. The proffered heart is more important than the pious litany; the most beautifully worded prayer is not so welcome to thee as the penitent son's crossing the threshold of his father's home. Accept my love, too deep for words, as my prayer. Amen. — *Harold Leonard Bowman, pastor emeritus, First Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois.*

Certainty

By James Wm. Morgan

THE QUEST for certainty in our religious faith is something that bothers us all in varying degrees. When we were children we were seldom plagued by doubts. God was exactly like our parents, preachers and teachers said he was. But as we grew older, all sorts of doubts began to plague us and we never again found the sort of comfortable certainty we knew as children. Not many of us grew to maturity without wondering if God was not just as much a fiction as Santa Claus. Perhaps we were fortunate enough in our growth to realize that our faith was something that could not be handed to us by another; it had to be ours or it was nothing. But though maturity has settled some things, it has never made us absolutely certain once and for all. Even as the soul hungers after God, so the mind hungers after certainty, or at least for the assurance that we are moving in the right direction.

So great has been this hunger that many people have used desperate means to find an authority that would end all their uncertainty. The Roman Catholic Church has one of its many great appeals at this point. The Roman Church promises religious certainty by establishing the church as the final authority. And if you can submit your mind and conscience to the belief that the Roman Catholic Church is the final and ultimate authority, you can be a good Roman Catholic. Many are they who have found a seeming assurance and final certainty in its massive structure and long history.

But Protestants introduced or, as we believe, recaptured a dangerous, disconcerting but essential thought in this process: the responsibility of the individual before God. The church may lead and nurture and guide us to God but it cannot substitute for our own direct access to God, our direct responsibility to him. To remove the church as the final authority has brought the dangerous virtue of freedom as well as responsibility, and from that freedom has come a difficult independence.

More than once Protestants have shrunk from this dangerous path of freedom and have tried to establish their own final authority in the Holy Scriptures. "The Bible is our final authority and the source of our certainty" has been the cry of such people. But here was still an individual interpreting those Scriptures, and it does not take much thinking to realize that we can doubt our interpretation. Thus such a foolish authority has not only *not* brought certainty, it has brought us our many divisions. Furthermore, it is a source of deep anxiety rather than certainty, for if your faith is based on the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures then any new light on the Scriptures threatens to destroy your faith.

Others feel that certainty is the result of their cumulative knowledge about Christianity. As they have learned more and lived longer, they have grown more certain. Usually this is not certainty so much as the hardening of our spiritual arteries. And the real increase of knowledge should make us learn how impossible it is to prove any part of our faith. Others have tried to make reason their final authority, but vigorous reasons often lead to opposite conclusions. So often reason itself becomes our God. Still others, and I suspect this is the largest group, try to find their certainty simply by closing their minds to all new or disturbing truth. If something they read disturbs their faith they stop reading. How terrible must be their fear. This surely is not certainty.

I did not conceive this message primarily for students, for this is a deep concern of modern man. Yet, it is almost inevitable that a student shall find his faith shaken during his university years. Not because sly, atheistic professors will steal his faith. There will doubtless be a few of those, but many professors are in church this morning, bowing before this same God we seek. The turmoil is almost

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This sermon explores one of the deep concerns of modern man: "How can I know?" The phrase I know *occurs repeatedly in the Bible; the author of this message uses none of them, but he concludes, as many such passages do, in the affirmation of absolute trust and obedience to God as the only source of spiritual certainty.*

evitable because a university's function is to reak up the crusts of one's mind and deliver it om the childhood of secondhand beliefs to the aturity of independent, responsible thinking. In is turmoil many are lost. But I would not try o save anyone from the turmoil, for I have come o believe it is a part of the birth agony of matur- y. I would hope, instead, to save them from the anic and despair that grips so many when they each this crisis of their faith. I would hope to oint to some distant stars that will keep them on ie right path when these days of turmoil come.

If it is any comfort, no one is alone in this onfusion. All through history has come this hu- an cry, first uttered by Job: "O that I knew where might find Him." It is the cry of the creature. It s almost the mark of our creaturehood. For some eason we can only faintly see and understand, God as demanded that we know him only by faith, that ve follow and obey him by trust, not by absolute ight or absolute knowledge.

Road-markers from Isaiah

After such a long introduction, you will not expect a simple or final answer. I would like to point out some road-markers on this quest for cer- tainty by going back to some powerful truths found in Isaiah 6:1-8, in which he tells of his remark- able vision and his call from God, back in the year when King Uzziah died. When you look be- hind the imagery of his language, you discover that it is the kind of experience God's children have had down through the ages. I have felt as Isaiah felt. I too have been confronted with this mysterious God.

Here was a man in a difficult period of history. The king had died, the country was in turmoil, and this man in his anxiety had gone into the tem- ple. God was overwhelmingly real to him in that moment. He needed all the powerful language of symbolism to describe the effect this vision of God had upon him. The greatness and majesty of God were so overwhelming that he used all the superla- tives he knew in his attempt to describe it. His soul had been confronted with God. His first re- action was a feeling of uncleanness and unworthi- ness, not unlike the feelings we have when we are confronted with God. But almost immediately, when he had confessed his unworthiness, he expe- rienced forgiveness and cleansing which he could describe only as a red-hot coal placed on his lips.

Then comes the demand of this great and glori- ous God. Isaiah did not receive his cleansing and then go forth and tell everyone that he had found the true faith and had it in his pocket. Every ex- perience of God demands something of us. When God confronts man it is not to startle him like a ghost. It is for a purpose. "Whom shall I send and who will go for me?" he is asking of Isaiah. And Isaiah's great answer is the answer of dedication and trust and therefore certainty: "Here am I, Lord, send me!"

I have retold this story for this reason: If we should go to Isaiah and ask him, "How can you be sure this is real? You know that we can have all sorts of delusions; you know the tricks our minds can play upon us; what sort of authority do you have?" I'm sure he could only reply, "God has called me, and there is only one gift I can give — my life!" He could quote you reams of Scripture, he could tell you of the massive teachings of the church, but finally his certainty would make sense only so long as he kept his eyes focused upon God and not upon the rational or irrational means by which he received the experience. Faith, finally, is trust that you are willing to act upon.

Illustrations abound. Look at Paul and his vision on the Damascus Road. The narrative does not emphasize the long period of turmoil that fol- lowed that vision but, when Paul responded to God with his life, he probably demonstrated the greatest certainty man has ever known. Or look on down the pages of history at a Luther standing before his accusers and declaring: "Here stand I; God help me; I can do no other." These men surely had no faith or certainty in their ability to grasp God and understand him. Their faith was in the fact that God had laid hold of them. Certainty lies not in any ability we have to find God; *it can lie only in the fact that he has found us!*

His Inescapable Presence

"Come now," you may say, "you're solving the problem by dodging the problem. How do I know he lays hold of me?" I can only reply that as long as we fix our attention on the means by which we receive this knowledge, we shall never have the certainty of these great souls of the past. Paul Tillich describes this experience in *The New Be- ing:* "We may not comprehend, but we *are* com- prehended. We may not grasp anything in the depth of our uncertainty, but we are grasped by something ultimate which keeps us in its grasp and from which we may strive in vain to escape."

If you would have certainty, seek for it in the inescapable nature of our faith. Find it in Psalm 139: "Whither shall I flee from thy spirit, or whither shall I go from thy presence." Find it again in the modern counterpart of Psalm 139, Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heav- en," in which the poet is not talking about the difficulty of finding God but the terrible difficulty of escaping his brooding presence, which he de- clares follows him like a hound of heaven.

You see, Christianity is primarily a declaration, not a system of theology or an opinion about reli- gion. The Bible is a record, not of men's ideas about God, but of declarations about God's mighty acts to men. The whole Bible is the story of God confronting man with his presence. We can find

him only because he is always seeking us. I can stand before you with joy to declare to you this treasure that has been given, this testimony of the ages, this declaration of the biblical faith of the mighty acts of God.

Dodging the issue? When you look back into the slender threads of belief you call your faith, there remain always some truths you are willing to bet your life upon. Why are you so certain of them? Surely not because you are so smart or because you can trust your experience. It is because this is the undeniable, inescapable truth that demands your response, your obedience and your trust.

Wherein came this certainty you do have? Here is a common experience: In church, or alone, in trouble or in guilt, we have closed our eyes, bowed our heads in our hands and said, "O God"; and almost before we have known why, beyond all our intentions, we have found ourselves confessing our sins and our unworthiness. Why? For me, there is only one explanation. At this moment we have stopped trying to escape this God and we have faced him who is always at the door of our conscience, awaiting only until we shall be still and know that he is God. And when this God is allowed to confront us, unless we fight strongly against it, we shall have to confess to him that which we try to withhold even from ourselves. Or take another common experience: When life has overflowed in goodness and joy, when it has brought happiness beyond any human right to deserve, we have found ourselves singing praises to God, pouring out our thanksgiving from the depths of our hearts. Why?

I can only answer these common experiences in one way: The God who made us also loves us. We are made to respond to him in repentance and thanksgiving. If we look entirely upon our own mind and its ways of finding God, we shall never understand, but if we keep our eyes upon this God who confronts us there can be all the certainty life requires. We find him because he first has found us. He is a seeking God, and were he not seeking us, all the combined and puny efforts of our minds would never even approach the vast mystery that is God.

The most typical illustration of how easily we become confused in this regard is in our attitudes toward prayer. How many judge the value or lack of value of their prayers by their personal feeling about their prayer? If they tingle it is a good prayer and God is close by. If they feel forgiven God has forgiven them. How ridiculous! How you feel about your prayers may have more to do with your digestion than your theology. We cannot judge God's action upon our lives by how we feel about our prayers. If we are repentant, he has forgiven us whether our spine tingles or not, whether we feel all holy inside or not. God is there whether we feel him or not.

You see, this is just another example of modern man's failure. *Self*-confidence, *self*-certainty, *self*-mastery — this is the real religion of our day. A religion of human will and effort keeps us from focusing our attention on God. This is how we would rewrite this famous Scripture from Isaiah: "In the year that King Uzziah died, *I* resolved [that with the help of God] *I* would think only positive thoughts and so come to believe in *myself*. And suddenly *I* saw *myself* sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; and *I* knew *my* own strength and power; and *I* said, '*I* will stamp on *my* mind a mental image of *myself* as succeeding'; and when I said, 'Who will help *me*?' the Lord said, 'Here am I, use me!' " But God never says this to us. He will never be used for purposes; we are to be used for his purposes.

These are the diseases of modernity. Our self is enthroned in the center of the world and we make it impossible to see the great God who created our lives and upon whom our attention must be centered.

A few years ago there came to America a very serious play called *The Sign of Jonah,* written by a pastor who is somewhere in East Germany. So deeply did it speak to the anguish and anger of the postwar years in Germany that his play ran for over a thousand performances on a West Berlin stage. The climax of the action comes when mankind, up for judgment for the world's sin, turns against God as the guilty one and sentences him to experience for himself the agony of a displaced person. Three Archangels carry out the sentence, strengthening God "only from afar that he might continue to suffer, just as he gave consolation to the believers, consoling them in order that they might continue to suffer."

The Archangels depart and, in the long silence that follows, the people on the stage and in the audience realize *that God has already served his sentence.* It is strong medicine for our modern self-centered day that would even dare to set the terms for God. He has the right to speak to us and to demand our absolute trust and obedience. Only in this lies our certainty.

IN MEMORIAM

DR. FRANK B. FAGERBURG, minister of the First Baptist Church of Redlands, California, and for many years an Editorial Associate of The Pulpit, passed away on July 21, 1960, while on vacation at Laguna Beach. Through the years Dr. Fagerburg not only contributed numerous sermons to The Pulpit but also gave the editors of the magazine valuable counsel. We salute his long, significant ministry and join those who mourn his death.

Saints, Sinners, Simpletons

By Thomas H. Britton

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
Psalm 14:1.

IT IS strangely characteristic of the sophisticated generation of which we are a part that it places a great deal more emphasis upon mental than upon ethical achievement, and more value upon intellectual than moral strength. Some of us speak with gentleness and fondness and even with an element of quiet pride about our forebears whom we describe perhaps as having been "simple but pious folk." And though we intend a compliment, it is a compliment we would not covet for ourselves. For, given a choice between having the reputation of being simple but virtuous on the one hand, or of being smart though somewhat naughty on the other, most of us would select the latter standing. In other words, to be termed a simpleton would be to us more of an insult than to be termed a sinner, though the first term reflects only upon the astuteness of our mind while the other reflects upon the quality of our life. It is possible that we might even smile with patient toleration at the man who refers to some small moral deviation on our part. But if looks could kill, God pity the man who calls us a fool!

It is especially strange that this attitude is characteristic of people who are acquainted with the Bible and have been taught by the church, for assigning to intelligence a higher rank than that accorded to virtue is contrary to biblical faith and Christian teaching. This is not to say that Christianity does not consider intelligence important or that it has no concern about the accomplishments of the mind. Quite the contrary, Christianity rightly understood represents the highest kind of intellectuality — the wisdom of God himself. And when it deals with the subjects of virtue and sin, the Christian faith considers them not merely in terms of right and wrong, but also in terms of prudence and folly. In short, Christian faith maintains that among all the simpletons on the face of the earth, the man who sins is the worst and greatest fool of all.

Consider the practical atheist described by the psalmist, and note that he is a *practical* atheist. He is one who says *in his heart,* "There is no God." He may or may not be a professing atheist, one who merely denies God with his lips. Rather, he is a practical, practicing atheist who denies God in his heart and, therefore, with his life. Consider how the psalmist describes him. Sinner that he is, he is not merely a sinner. The psalmist prefers to call him a fool! "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' " And, as one writer has suggested, we have made the mistake of assuming that here the psalmist was "deriding the atheist," whereas actually he was giving the "definition of a fool." As John J. Moment put it, "This is what a fool is: a man who does not believe in God," or who, no matter what he professes with his mouth, acts as though there were no God.

Or consider the story of the rich man in the parable of Jesus. His land brought forth much grain — according to the account in Luke's Gospel — so much that a decision had to be made with regard to it. Someone has remarked that this story is the first recorded instance of a farm commodity surplus problem. And the man's way of dealing with it seems strangely modern: He decided to build larger barns and store his surplus grain. Then he said to himself, "Take your ease, eat, drink, be merry." How did Jesus feel about this man? That he was a sinner? Indeed he was a sinner, for he was one who laid up treasure for himself at the price of not being "rich toward God." But what word did Jesus use to report God's reaction to this man's selfish arrangement? He used the word "fool!" "Fool! this night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

Another example from the stories of Jesus is that quaint tale about the maidens whose duty it was to wait for the bridegroom at the wedding. You remember, as Matthew recounts the incident,

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how the maidens had a responsibility to greet the bridegroom with lighted lamps whenever he would appear. Five of them secured oil for their lamps, but five of them neglected to do so. And when the bridegroom came the five who had prepared were able to perform their function, but the others were not. And what was Jesus' judgment of those who were unprepared? Were they guilty of a sinful neglect of responsibility? Indeed they were! But did Jesus describe them by saying that five were virtuous and five were sinful? No, he said that five of them were wise and five were foolish. Sinners they were. And because they were sinners they were simpletons too.

And finally, the story in which Jesus was not the narrator but the principal figure, the tragic story of the crucifixion. You recall how the authorities sent him to be whipped and how a crown of thorns was crushed down upon his brow and how they compelled him to carry the heavy cross up the hill outside Jerusalem's wall, and when he could carry it no longer, they impressed Simon of Cyrene into service. When they reached the top of the hill called The Skull, the soldiers nailed his hands and feet to the cross and lifted it up so that he hung between two criminals. Jesus did not permit the agonizing pain to make him bitter; on the contrary, he prayed to God that his crucifiers might be forgiven. But do you recall how Jesus referred to them? Sinners they surely were. In fact, the heaviness of their sin was so great that the thought of it makes us shudder. Think of the mammoth weight of the sin of those who would kill the Son of God! But how did Jesus refer to his murderers as he uttered his prayer on their behalf? Compassionately, imploringly, quietly he whispered, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Grant them pardon, for they are ignorant. They lack intelligence. They are fools!

It has been frequently asserted that the basic sin from which all other sins proceed is the sin of pride. And it was this basic sin which resulted in the death of Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees sought his elimination, for wherever he went they lost popularity. Their following diminished while "the common people heard Him gladly." Their pride was wounded, and they sought revenge. The chief priests and other temple authorities were hurt by his thrusts against the staid and stale formalism which was characteristic of institutional worship and by his vigorous opposition to the commercialization of the house of God. Their pride was wounded, and they plotted against him.

It was pride which prompted Judas to betray his master, for he had grown weary of being a disciple and yearned to be a master himself, a man of authority in the kingdom which at first he thought Jesus would establish. And when he finally realized that the Kingdom of Jesus was not of this world, it was a blow to his pride. And he was moved to an act of betrayal. It was pride which dictated the role of Roman authority in the drama of Christ's trial and execution. Pilate was too proud to dirty his hands by interfering in the petty affairs of a conquered people, and therefore, in spite of washing his hands, he stained them with innocent blood. And it was pride which prompted the multitude to call for the release of Barabbas and the killing of Jesus. It gave the people a sense of power to decree the victory of a criminal and the defeat of one whom some called a king.

And it is in his acts of pride that man reveals himself to be the greatest fool. Bernard Iddings Bell once described pride as "the sin of the country clown, the bumpkin who struts and puffs and preens himself, confident of admiration, with no appreciation of the enormous joke he has made of himself by his conceit." Then he went on to say, "Some men are proud of their progenitors, an odd thing since we did not produce our fathers but they us. Some are proud of worldly achievements soon to be utterly forgotten. Some are proud of cleverness, a cleverness which must sound rather tame in the ears of angels. Some are proud of wealth, though there are no pockets in a shroud."* To be proud, whatever the cause, is to be foolish. And to be a deliberate sinner is to be a simpleton!

It is very strange indeed, therefore, that the sophisticated generation of which we are a part has somehow adopted the idea that it is clever to be naughty and that the smart people of the world are those who are not so concerned about moral restraints and moral principles as to let these get in their way. And it is strange that our generation has come somehow to the point of view that those "stuffy" individuals who insist upon the importance of virtue and the primacy of moral and ethical values are intellectually out-of-date and out of touch with the hard, cold facts of life. There are many people, respected in our society, who would be ashamed to violate any of the minute laws of etiquette, but who would not hesitate for the sake of some advantage to violate the law of God. And they are like the Pharisees who lived in Jesus' time, men who would not think of neglecting to wash their hands before eating, but out of whose mouths and from whose hearts proceeded all manner of evil and uncleanness.

These new Pharisees, like the old, are foolish men. This, then, is the point of view of our Christian faith. It is the saints who are smart, not the sinners! And it is the sinners who are simpletons, not the saints! "Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them," said Jesus, "will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. . . . And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. . . ."

* Bernard Iddings Bell, *God Is Not Dead* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945). Used by permission.

Struggle of the Giants

By John S. Jury

WE shall live out our lives in the midst of a struggle between two giants. There will be no peace in our time unless Christians put their minds to the problems which beset mankind; nor will there be peace in our children's time if we neglect to do so. It needs to be said that the Christian church does not identify itself with any political or economic system. When Christians from socialist Britain, Christians from communist China or communist Russia or capitalist United States or co-operative Scandinavia come together they are one; not held together nor separated by political or economic systems, but bound to one another by a common alliance to Jesus Christ. When Christians in any society identify themselves with whatever economic or political system may be current at that moment, they become chaplains to a society as it is. It needs to be reiterated that Christianity does not identify itself with any social, political or economic system but stands as a common judge of all in order that it shall meet the ethical and moral concepts of its Lord. Rather than a discussion of politics and economics, what is needed is an understanding by the individual Christian, of the fundamental undergirdings, the philosophy and beliefs of men which find expression in their political and economic life. Then we shall understand the relationship between Communism and Christianity.

Similarities

There are a number of similarities between Christianity and Communism. In the first place, both groups are working to win the same people and are working among the same people. In Matthew and again in Luke Jesus is reported as saying: "Those who are whole do not need a physician but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance." The mission of the Christian church is what it has always been: to the poor, to the hungry, to the exploited, to those who suffer indignities, to those who never have had the ability to raise their heads in poise as a human being but who are half slave and half free, to those who are discriminated against, to the landless and to the unloved.

These are the same people to whom the Communists go and they say essentially the same thing to them: "We bring you hope, you who are tired and poor and discriminated against and sick. Ours is the only hope backed by action." The false messiahs, Fascist or Communist, descend upon those who are poor, insecure and in the midst of fear and oppression. They operate in the cesspools of humanity, offering hope. Christianity and Communism send their gospel to the same people.

The second similarity is that we are both trying to win the world with a superior idea. Communism's basic appeal is to the mind and it is there that the battle will need to be fought. Radhakrishnan, Indian statesman and scholar writes in his book *East and West, The End of Their Separation*: "The cold war . . . is between two claimants for the soul of man."

Before Christianity is an act it is a belief. We claim that these beliefs are the foundation, not only of the individual's moral life, but also of the social structure. Just as the Communist movement in the "have-not" countries is in the minority, so the Christians were a minority in the past. The Christians were a secret fifth-column movement, persecuted, driven underground; but they spread the Word anyhow; with zeal and passion they suffered the consequences of martyrdom. In our day we continue to export our Christian beliefs. We send them where they are not welcome. We send them to people who are degenerate and unlovely, believing that these people receive the promises of

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The similarities and the differences between Communism and Christianity, the temptations which lure the people of a capitalistic society away from Christian concepts and practices toward the ways and means and ends of Communism, the bases on which Christianity must stand as "the hope of the world," — these are the emphases which make this sermon particularly relevant.

our hope and are altered and redeemed. The revolution abroad in the world today has come about because we have sent missionaries into unlikely communities and nations and taught them to read; we taught them that men have dignity in the sight of God, that men are equal. Now that they can read, now that they have a sense of dignity before God, they are restless; they do not want to be made to suffer the plagues of sickness, poverty, hunger and exploitation needlessly.

A third similarity is that we both have a concept of history and a utopia towards which we work. The Communist calls his the "classless society" on earth. He believes that all the historic processes are working towards a classless society where there will no longer be any exploitation of man by man; where there will no longer be discrimination. This will be their utopia and they believe that the process leading to its accomplishment is inevitable. True Marxists believe the triumph of the classless society is predetermined, for the greed within the capitalistic system will destroy itself and all one needs to do is wait; both history and time are on their side. Capitalism will overextend itself and they will pick up the pieces. Christians, too, have their concept of utopia. We call it the "Kingdom of God." We say the end of history is moving towards its consummation. If this Kingdom is something beyond history, that is, in Heaven, we are really playing into the hands of the Communists for then we are saying: "There is no hope here and all we can do is bear the unbearable and stand up under all of the insufferable putrefaction within society. We must take it; there isn't a thing we can do about it. If there is going to be a solution at all it is something that God will do beyond history. We are here, we grin and bear it." This plays directly into the hands of the Communists and strengthens their case before the hopeless. Such fatalism does not square with the teaching in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven." Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God, the utopia that is to be, when man's love will correspond to God's love and man's will to God's will and purpose — these are to be accomplished on earth and shall come as God works in and through men to effect their well-being.

Differences

While these are a few of the similarities, there are many, many differences. There is a great difference in our thought about human life. Communism advances the belief that some men are regenerate and can neither be helped nor saved. Therefore, kill the owners and the rulers; do away with them so that the one-class society will evolve as we rid ourselves of the oppressors. Christianity has a different concept of human nature. It teaches that human nature can be changed, that we do not kill a man, we convert him. The direction of one's mind can and will be altered. Otherwise, what is the sense of preaching or teaching, of missions or missionaries? The Christian's faith is grounded in the belief that the dissemination of the Word of God will alter life; that humankind can be changed from its bent for persecution to proclamation and we witness just such an occurrence in Paul. The words we use are conversion, transformation, redemption and repentance.

A revealing study of the American Communist by Morris L. Ernst and David Loth entitled *Report on the Communist* indicates that in the thirty years between 1920 and 1950 — before McCarthyism — 700,000 people had joined the Communist party and left it. The Communist party in the United States has never been that large. This is the number of people who had progressed through its ranks. It amounts to a traffic of about 25,000 a year. The authors interviewed a large sampling of these 700,000 to determine what kind of people they were. They discovered that the majority had both joined the party and left it before they were twenty-three years of age. Secondly, that these were children that came from homes of privilege where they had both comforts and luxuries.

They were similar to each other in that, for the most part, they had never had a sense of belonging, were unpopular, ignored and shy. These people sought expression in a cause and they never found that cause in the church. The popular conception of what a Communist is does not correspond with the facts revealed in this study. These people are redeemable; they can be converted and challenged by the Word of the church and the gospel of Jesus Christ as it lays a claim upon them and gives significance to their lives.

Second is the difference in our thought about God. Communism teaches there is no God. If we are going to have an abundance of things, we have to take care of ourselves. If we do not take care of ourselves, no one else will. Whereas Christianity says: "There is a God who cares and works in and through men." He is the ultimate reality and his will shall be done on earth.

Third is the difference in the matter of reward. Communism teaches that adherence to the system pays off materially with more possessions and higher standards of living. Christianity says we are good not because it pays. We are good because good is the way to be. Virtue is its own reward and we do not go to church and learn to live the ethical and moral life because it will pay off materially. We do not develop character because it is financially rewarding. We are good for goodness' sake; we seek the supreme good for our own life because that is supremely worth the effort.

Again, we differ in the means we employ. We do not liquidate the Kulaks because they will not collectivize their farms. We do not send peasants

) Siberia because they want land reform. The Christian in order to be consistent does not sacrifice thers for his ends but takes upon himself the ross. We believe that we are accountable for our cts. "This night your soul will be required of ou." What evil means are you using to gain your ood ends? This night you render an accounting. The Christian believes that one submits to God's urpose and will, doing it even though it may look oolish in the light of practical events. Christians se the means consistent with the Christ-Spirit and eave the result to God. Man is not responsible for he result. He is responsible for the present act. One dare not sacrifice the present for some future ope by using evil means in the fallacious assumption that he will gain a good end.

Theory, not Practice

These are some of the differences between Communism and Christianity. However, they are differences in theory; in practice the differences are almost eradicated. In practice we are much more like Communists than we care to admit. For example, one of the most devastating criticisms of Communism is that it is materialistic atheism. This is a two-edged sword and we need to look at our own materialism and our own atheism. Do churchmen customarily ask the questions about individuals that reveal the sensitivity of their mind and the depth of their soul? Or, do they ask: "What kind of a car does he drive? How much did he pay for his home?" In our land science is worshiped, not because it is a way of knowledge nor because it discovers truths, but because it gives us gadgets. The worship of things is not confined to geographic lines, nor is atheism.

Much of what passes for religion is the learning of techniques for reducing God to the role of chaplain and bellboy. The God who runs and does your bidding and mine does not exist. God is our father, and we are here in order to search his mind, heart and soul; to find out what he wants us to do. The people who say the church ought not to be concerned with the economic welfare of men nor judge the political processes, but ought instead, to stick to "religion" are saying exactly what the Communists are saying: "Church, get inside your walls and read your rubrics."

Though we differ in theory, in actual practice we use the same methods. We trust the power of violence to do our good. The Communist says: "We choose the bomb over the Bible." The American Christian says: "We choose the bomb and the Bible." When fear comes with its dehumanizing power we both trust in the same things. We believe as do they that we can achieve good ends through evil means, that we can sow thorns and reap wheat. Intellectually, in groups of two and three, we will deny this but practically, as individuals and as a nation, we will waste the resources of our land and the flower of our youth as an offering to the cult of violence. When we, in this power struggle between two giants, between two ideologies, adopt their weapons, their methods, we become like them. When Christians claim that they have the answers and then act as though they never heard of them, what is to become of their Christianity? What hope is there for the world?

Christianity is the "hope of the world" so long as it is true to its mission: First, by doing away with those septic conditions which breed Communism. As long as there is poverty, as long as there is illness, as long as there is suffering and discrimination, as long as putrid social conditions exist in our world, Communism will breed in them. The Communist gets indignant at these conditions and wants to avenge them. Christians need not avenge them; they need to bring compassion to them and to heal them. The churchman must identify himself with the suffering people of the world as did Jesus. In this wise they will show mankind a way, not of vengeance, but of compassion and redemption. Second, the churchman needs to declare that above all human authority is a supreme authority that is just, righteous and good; that his loving will brings into judgment all systems. Third, Christians need to teach that all men are of a common humanity and that they have the same physical and spiritual needs. Fourth, as a church they need to practice a ministry of reconciliation between groups which are at enmity with each other, whether divided by race or creed, political belief, nationality or economic status. The church has a reconciling ministry to bridge these gaps so that mankind might be one.

Individual Christian Commitment

Moving from the Christian church to the Christian individual we need to be just as specific. There is no such thing as *the* church. These are names for concepts, theories, disembodied entities. There is no such thing as Christianity. Essentially there are only individual Christians who belong to particular churches. Therefore the question becomes: "What must I do?" Christianity does nothing. I as an individual do something. I am the church.

So far as the efficacy of the individual is concerned the fundamental fact is that without commitment there are no Christians. Not a commitment to beliefs, but a commitment to acts and deeds. Love, the idea, becomes flesh and dwells among men. This is commitment. Christianity is not talking or worshiping but being: the spirit of Christ alive and walking among men.

Secondly, without zeal there is no victory. How do you measure zeal? Is it by what a man does? The measure of a man, as well as a man's zeal, is the size of the idea that uses him. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, volunteers for the Red Cross, P.T.A. and Little League — all of these are good causes and

the church should be providing leadership for anything that is good. However, they are leaves upon the tree and through centuries there have been many leaves; they die and new ones take their place. But the *church* is the tree! If the tree dies, will the leaves bud and sprout in the spring?

Third, without discipline there is no Christianity. Discipline means the doing of the greater thing when the lesser is alluring. Discipline means sacrificing when it is not convenient. It means believing in the incredible good when the despicable evil is against it; hoping when hope is not warranted; loving when the loveless and unlovable are all around us.

If Communism wins it will not be because it is right, for Communism is wrong; but it is zealous, committed and dedicated. If Christianity loses it will not be because it is wrong, for Christianity is right but it is lukewarm. What John said concerning the church at Laodicea in the Book of Revelation parallels the judgment of God upon the lukewarm churches of America: "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot I will spew you out of my mouth." Will Communism swallow the world? Will Christianity liberate the world? Only if Christianity lives what it professes. Only if it adheres to its own weapons of sacrificial love. Only if the individual Christians are committed, zealous and disciplined. Without commitment there are no Christians. Without zeal there is no victory. Without discipline there is neither church nor Christianity.

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

I HAVE just returned from a church conference and I'm feeling mighty low. Brethren, let us confess that such affairs do not represent the church at its best. I must admit, however, that there seems to be no substitute for such meetings and it looks as if we shall have them to the end of time, which is as long as God promised to maintain the church. But I wonder if God doesn't feel like making a motion to adjourn and go home, not once, but many times in these ecclesiastical gatherings.

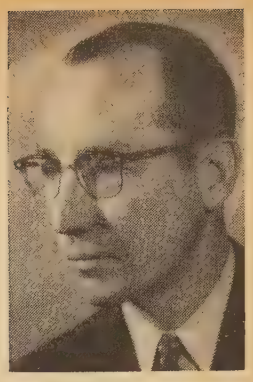
Among the aggravations of church conferences are the boys who are always speaking for the record. They want to be sure the journal will contain some of their flights of eloquence so the folks back home will know they elected a delegate who is a leader. These speeches hardly ever say anything and are seldom made if the issue is controversial, but resolutions to honor somebody or to pray for something are pretty safe, and these subjects are nearly all pre-empted by the boys who want to say later, "Look, Ma, I was speaking."

Another large class of orators is those who are running for some office. You can't be elected a bishop by keeping your mouth shut, or at least that's the theory. So along toward the end of the conference these birds arise and spread their wings. They just want to assure everyone that they love everybody and they appreciate everything. Their carefully prepared extemporaneous remarks are full of general literary allusions and nearly always contain a poem or two. I couldn't prove this but I would wager two to one that the reason some candidates have been running for years and never get very close to the promised land is these conference speeches.

Then come the specialists in delay after the previous question has been voted. The chairman points out that the motion is not debatable, but they want to ask a question. My reaction is that after the long debate, a fellow who still doesn't know what the motion means is too stupid to be a delegate. But these boys are subtle. They want to get in another little argument by way of a question and too many chairmen, not desiring to be arbitrary, let them get away with it.

It's amazing to note how few do nearly all of the talking. Out of one thousand delegates, fifty men will monopolize 90 per cent of the time. Are these the wisest, the biggest, the greatest men? Dear friends, they are not. It's not an ironbound rule but generally true that the best men speak seldom and speak briefly. Not so anxious for publicity, they do their work quietly and humbly. They are the boys in the back room planning some godly strategy to move the church along another foot. But when they speak, people listen.

Some time ago I was in Istanbul enjoying the hospitality of the Orthodox Church. One of the bishops accompanied us to the Halke Theological Seminary situated on an island in the Sea of Marmara. Early in the morning the boat stopped at a little town called Chalcedon. It was an ordinary looking place and I asked the bishop if this was where the great Council had been held. He said it was and that the date was 541 A.D. I read about it later and found its conclusions pleased hardly anyone and its debates were often bitter. You know what I think? I think that many of those 600 bishops felt as discouraged when that Council broke up as poor old Kish feels right now. God moves in mysterious ways, even through the conferences of his church.



Choosing a God

By C. Ellis Nelson

CAN a person choose his God?

We hear some theologians say that one is grasped by God, that God chooses us, or that God is the name for the ongoingness of life and therefore there is nothing to choose; we can only accept life and death with grace and gratitude.

But the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua gives us a different image of God. Here the story of the Hebrew conquest of the promised land is concluded with a recital of God's guidance and protection of his people. The writer creates a dramatic scene, for he visualizes the great military leader Joshua calling together the entire nation just before his death to receive his final words. Indeed the writer reviews the entire history of the Hebrews since Abraham's day, but the most important part of the review, the conquest of Palestine, hardly needs to be described, for many in the audience were Joshua's comrades-in-arms, his captains and lieutenants, who had now grown old.

This is a powerful, dramatic scene for the events being reviewed were wars they had fought and sufferings they had endured. Only too real is the line, "You are living in cities you did not build, eating from trees you did not plant." A note of sadness and profundity pervades anything we do for the last time. Here the leader, who symbolizes the triumph of military strategy and victory of faith over doubt, stands to bid the nation farewell. The writer of this drama has Joshua underplay the scene. You would expect such a leader to take some credit for the enormous achievement, but Joshua speaks only of God's activity; you would expect the orator to thunder forth a mighty challenge to his people, to urge them to a more glamorous future, but Joshua speaks of one's relationship to God. In short, he is saying: The great issue of life is the God you choose. The nation has been established on the God of Israel but the people are free to choose and they might forget the God of Israel and take a convenient religion.

If I were directing this historical drama I would have Joshua give his choices with a wistful voice and a vacant stare, as if he were transcending time and addressing his words to all generations of men, for he is posing a problem of contemporary significance. Note how he makes his point: "Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell."

People will be religious; they will commit their lives to something. We cannot live in difficult times without some explanation for living. Most of us will do just what Joshua's speech implies: We will select a religion or a god that makes the least demands on our lives. What most of us want in religion is the maximum of security, the assurance of affection and the least interference with our moral conduct. The two main sources of such a religion are our fathers and our culture.

The God of Our Fathers

A person might choose the god of his fathers. In the biblical instance it is not necessary to look up the name of the deity referred to, although it is assumed to be a moon god. The source, however, is important because the family continues to be the first source of religion. In our Freudian era we are accustomed to this point of view. Physicians who work carefully and deeply with troubled souls can often trace rather accurately the way in which a parent has so influenced a child that the child develops a distorted view of God. This is a favorite theme of novelists and dramatists today.

In Norman Mailer's novel *The Naked and the Dead* one of the principal characters is shown to be

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Does Joshua's imperative make any claim upon us and upon the people to whom we minister? This sermon declares that it does. Are we cubs carried by the mother tiger or baby monkeys clinging to the mother's back? This sermon argues that we have our salvation by choosing and clinging in commitment.

unusually brutal and aggressive in his vindictiveness against the enemy. A soldier, fighting on a Pacific Island during the last war, demonstrates behavior that is meritorious in battle but the writer feels called upon to trace this conduct back to the childhood of the soldier. The author, in great detail, shows how the boy's father taught him to kill animals, and also how the father would deliberately be cruel to the boy to toughen him against suffering. Under those circumstances one would have little reason to doubt that this soldier's god, if he had any conscious conception of God at all, would be a vindictive, legalistic and evil god.

The god of our fathers is in us. I have attended some urban churches where the favorite song in the adult Bible classes has been "The Church in the Wildwood" or some gospel song that obviously had not been learned in the sanctuary. When allowed to select a song without guidance, these first-generation urbanites went back to the songs their fathers taught them. Yes, the god of our fathers is in us, and deeply. Often this is very good. We learn from our parents to be forgiving, to be reverent, to worship, and to understand the Bible. Our problem is not whether the god of our fathers is in us or not. Our problem is, do we choose the god of our fathers to be our god?

Some people cannot accept the god of their fathers so they reject God. When a competent psychologist tells them that a child incorporates parts of his parents into himself and that God is nothing more than a father image projected onto the world, they accept this explanation and reject God. This is strange logic. It would be like saying that since we know the atmospheric conditions that produce storms, there are no storms. Or, since medical science can now in a measure control disease, there is no disease. Perhaps no arrogance comes more quickly or leaves more slowly than that which follows knowledge. If we know how to be good, we think we are good. If we know how to skillfully blend people together in a working relation, we think we have become the suffering servant or the prime minister of the Kingdom of God. So some people who come to see that the gods of their fathers are in them say there is no real God, only inherited gods of our fathers. This arrogant explanation prevents our even assuming that God can exist on his own terms apart from our existence.

On the other hand some people cannot accept any god except that of their fathers. These people are upset emotionally when anything challenges that god. Perhaps here is tragedy greater than the group who reject the god of their fathers. At least those who reject their father's god have some self-understanding and some conscious courage in denying what they do not believe. But the person who accepts is usually one who refuses to think about his faith, keeping it carefully preserved among his powerful irrational childish emotions. This is a type of ancestor worship under the façade of Christian beliefs. Preaching does not touch them, worship does not communicate the presence of God's spirit, and the fellowship of kindred minds does not interest them. About the only time these people are aroused is when some change in the church is suggested as substituting the Revised Standard Version for the King James Version of the Bible. All new suggestions are wrong because they were not done by the fathers. As sung in the song "That Old Time Religion," if it was "good for Paul and Silas it's good enough for me." Here we have the gods of the fathers so firmly impressed upon the children that the God of Israel cannot get in.

So, we must first face the gods of our fathers. That these gods are within us we cannot deny. Can we transcend these gods? Can we take the understanding of God given to us by our fathers and make it real within our own lives? The Apostle Paul was steeped in the Jewish law, the god of his fathers. He was imprisoned with this father-god, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, but finally he was able to break out and then he could say the law was like a schoolmaster; it led him to Christ.

The heritage of our fathers is only a prologue. The context of the drama we must work out ourselves with fear and trembling for it is a sacred task.

The God of Culture

Next to the gods within us implanted by our fathers, are the gods of our culture suggested by our friends. The second source of religion is culture. So the farewell speech could say, you might choose the gods of the Amorites "in whose land you dwell." This is our problem, too. Within the past quarter of a century we have had study after study by diligent researchers pointing out the power of culture to imbed itself deeply within a person. Because it is as invisible as air we fail to see that it shapes our inner being.

By culture I mean here the values we hold dear. A value is something with which we identify our well-being. In short, we give our lives to our values because they give meaning to our lives. In this sense culture is a religion for it is an explanation of reality. The deities of American culture are many and they vary from place to place, but the one that seems to characterize much of our striving is what Furfey, a Roman Catholic sociologist, calls the "success ideal." By this he means that the need to be successful envelopes our being, enthralls our will and commands our obedience.

Last September I was talking with a businessman who inquired about developments at Union Seminary as we opened our new academic year. He knew little about Union but asked if our enrollment were not larger than the previous year. I had to say "no" and go on to explain that Union found it necessary to restrict enrollment to those

for whom the educational program seemed appropriate. This caught my friend by surprise and for a moment he was confused, for he thought of Union as a great school. Then he said, "But you must have had more applicants this year than before!" It was impossible for him to think in any terms other than success, success meaning for him an increase in size.

This is the basic problem of success: Success is self-justifying. A few years ago when the New York Yankees had won the league championship and were playing in the World Series, a reporter asked Casey Stengel who would pitch the next day. Casey, recalling the name of one of his pitchers who had won against the team the previous time he pitched, said he would use him again because "I never argue with success." Few people will argue with success. That is the problem: we confuse success with rightness. One has only to read the papers with some reflection to see that we prove an evangelist right if he has the largest crowd or a political program good if it receives the greatest number of votes.

The God of Israel

The God of Israel is placed in sharp contrast to the god of the fathers or the god of culture. The writer has Joshua say, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." His comment is more than an exhortation; it is a description of the nature of God. Recall that the speech begins with a summary of Israel's history, showing how God guided Abraham to leave his home and found a new nation, how the people were rescued from slavery in Egypt and more recently how they had entered and conquered the promised land. God is defined in terms of activity. Here is the God who cares about the course of history; indeed, is himself caught up in the events that make history. This is a most audacious conception of God, some would even say a blasphemous idea of God, because it was the High and Holy One living with the sin, misery and destiny of man.

This conception of God immediately presents us with important and pressing questions: Why the Hebrew people? Why all the cruelty and bloodshed? Why did God's revelation of himself come so late, for mankind had certainly waxed and waned long before the Hebrews made their claim to a land and a kingdom. In truth I must say I do not know the answer. I can only say that there is a profundity here about the nature of God that is reaffirmed and confirmed in the New Testament.

Note the word choose. The biblical affirmation is that we can choose, that we are free and capable of choice. We are free only if we can choose something else. We are free to say Yes only if we can really say No. Even people who have had the best of Christian nurture are free to say No to God. We recall that our Lord said the rain fell on the just and the unjust, not according to moral merit. The play *J.B.* has aroused many about the place of evil in the world and the utter lack of logic about evil, death and disease in relation to the merit of a person. This is the price of freedom. If we are going to be free to say No then we must not and cannot have a world where goodness is rewarded by health, longevity or wealth. If that were true, only the idiot would be irreligious.

In our day we are more prone to question capacity for choice rather than freedom of choice. Does man really have the capacity to choose? Some of our social scientists paint a picture of society that leads us to see man as completely a product of his environment. If you know a man's color, race, social and class position, age, geographical location, marital situation and occupation, you can predict how he thinks and how he will vote. Amazing? No, practically all of our sampling techniques used in polling public opinion are based on this theory. But let us not blame the social scientists; they are not fabricating; they are merely describing a situation that actually exists.

Against this current of thought we place the biblical affirmation that man can choose his god. Certainly our Lord did not in any way force obedience; he said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Early in his career he began his sermons with the words, "Repent; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." He expected a person to be capable of responding. Indeed, Matthew places the Sermon on the Mount soon after these words to show what repentance would mean — the ethical life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Not only are we free and capable of choosing, we are invited by God to understand him in terms of the events of life. Out of the events of Israel's life, the writer of the book of Joshua finds meaning. This is perhaps the boldest idea in the Bible — that we can find the meaning of God in the events of life. The New Testament is a testimony to that idea of God — that God came in the life of Jesus. Again we are left with the questions: Why Jesus? Why Palestine? Why two thousand years ago? For these questions I do not have answers except to say that all these questions could be raised even if a Jesus had come at a different time and in a different place.

But Jesus came. One of the early believers is reported to have said, "Jesus is all that man can be, all that God ought to be." We find the meaning of God in our lives as we understand the meaning of Christ in the particular events of our lives. Then we are able to cry, "My Lord and my God." We say a lot about having faith in God — trust in Christ and finally all will be clear. I feel that we can turn that around and find more truth. God has faith in us. He allows, indeed, expects, us to choose, to make a conscious personal commitment; and in Christ we find a demonstration in human terms of what our commitment means.

Me, My Neighbor and God

By John F. Anderson, Jr.

LIFE becomes complicated in direct ratio to the number of persons involved. If you live alone life is relatively simple, even though it is lonely. But when the house is full of children or boarders, when the next house is the duplex eight inches beyond your wall, or a dwelling eight feet across a driveway, Christian patience is quickly taxed. Someone has said that man's troubles really began when he learned to make houses two stories high. Only after that development were cities possible, and cities are places where people inevitably crowd too closely together. Cities can be breathtakingly beautiful when you fly high over them in an airplane. However, they can be unbelievably ugly when you pass through the back alleys of a slum and view human beings living in animallike squallor. As the pressure to stay alive and maintain status increases and as individual worth and personality decreases, sin flourishes, taking an awful toll. Our text, Genesis 4:16, 17, is really a prophetic statement: "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord . . . and he builded a city." In these early pages of Scripture we discover that God made the first garden, but a murderer built the first city. In spite of this, cities have always thrived.

No list of problems of our modern life would be complete without an examination of the pressures caused by increased urbanization. One-half of the United States' population now lives in its twelve largest cities; the farm areas are losing one million inhabitants per year to city life. Even with the sprawling suburbs, we are packed far too closely. We live in crowded neighborhoods whether we care to be neighborly or not. Cities simply contain too many persons, too many places to hide, too many temptations, too much competition, too many choices, too much loneliness in the crowd. Some of us here have lived through "the gay nineties," "the roaring twenties," "the thrifty thirties," "the fighting forties," "the fabulous fifties," and now we enter the sixties. What adjective will the historians apply to it? As they look at our city and at the way in which we treat our neighbor, will they call it "the spiritual sixties" or will they paraphrase the word about Cain: "And they went out from the presence of God and builded a city"?

The City's Temptations

We must beware of practices which deny that God is in the city. Among the evils that are peculiarly strong temptations in a city are the desires to keep up, to look down and to shut out. Keeping up is natural to a point, for we are all conscious of our position in life and cannot help but compare ourselves to those around us. This natural urge can quickly get out of hand in the city, however, for there we have constant reminders of things we do not have, of products we ought to buy, of status symbols that would titillate our ego. Every economic class puts an inordinate value on things. Each level has its fetishes and its symbols of success. Some see their neighbor with a car larger than the house and they must have the same. Others add dogs and the dogwood to the yard to make an impression, while others move to a more pretentious part of town at the first raise in salary.

When our greed causes our sense of values to become distorted, we fall into the trap of loving things and using people instead of using things and loving people. And through it all we wonder why we are so frustrated in feeling that we are not loved. The truth is that covetousness can only lead to frustration, for the things we accumulate cannot love in return. Do you remember Aesop's fable of the covetous man who asked Zeus to grant him one wish? Zeus promised the man any one request that he might ask, on condition that his neighbor would get twice as much. The greedy egotist was unable to bear the thought of his neighbor's having such good fortune. In the end he made the wish that he would lose one eye! Cain compared himself to his

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JOHN F. ANDERSON, JR., *is minister of First Presbyterian Church, Orlando, Florida. After graduating from Austin College and Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Virginia, he served as chaplain in the U.S. Navy for two years before completing his work for a Master of Theology from Austin Seminary. Mr. Anderson has held pastorates in Tyler and Dallas, Texas.*

This sermon comes to grips with the increasing ethical problems of our growing city life. It moves from the scriptural account of the first generation to the present day with a swift, sure touch.

brother Abel, and could not tolerate the thought of being in second place. Instead of improving his product or the producer, he annihilated his competitor, a strategy characteristic of an urban community. This is why Christ broods over our cities as he did over Jerusalem. He wants us to hear him say, "Thou shalt not covet. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Looking down upon others is a sin resulting from the same motive of greed. The only difference is that it is committed by those who have already achieved status, who feel superior to those still climbing the success ladder. The snobbery of caste is nowhere so evident as in the city. Restrictions on neighborhood zoning is more than economics, for to be exclusive someone must be excluded. It is simply a question of basic attitude, of respect for personality made in the image of God and, therefore, sacred. Whether or not we despise our neighbors by looking down on them will determine whether or not God is in our city.

Shutting out others whom we consider inferior is the end result of this attitude. God still accuses us with his quiet inquiry, "Where is your brother?" In our self-righteousness we, like Cain, blurt back, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And then in a hundred ways we try to justify our prejudice which, after all, is nothing but prejudging — making a generalization without looking at each person as an individual. I recently read this meaningful statement: "Any sentence that begins, 'All girls are . . .' is simply not so." We readily see the point, do we not? Yet, we lie to ourselves by using some prejudiced generalization every day: We read of a crime which a Negro committed and we immediately respond, "That's a Negro for you." We hear of a member of the Jewish race making a business deal and we "pluck sour grapes" with, "That's the nature of the race, isn't it?" We somehow feel more secure in our principle that being different means being inferior. Thus our shutting-out process results in shutting out God also.

The City's Challenges

If God is to be seen in our city, it will be through his agents who stoop down, lift up and help out. We Christians cannot but be haunted by our Lord's story of the Good Samaritan. A man enmeshed in the metropolitan situation of Jerusalem and Jericho fell among thieves. The most telling part of the story is that the decent citizens of the city came but "passed by on the other side." It was the despised Samaritan who was willing to stoop down, lift up and help out. Consciences still burn when we hear the Lord say to us, "Which one was neighbor . . .?"

Listen to George Kelsey's answer: "Since Christian love means receiving, appreciating, and serving the other person as he is, it means accepting him as a whole. No man can love his neighbor's soul while holding his body in contempt. To reject any part of God's creation is to reject God's gift. A Christian loves his neighbor as a whole — as God gives his neighbor to him. If a Negro or a Chinese coolie is nasty, prejudice and bigotry say, turn your nose up at him. Christian love says, wash him. If a Negro or a Chinese coolie is ignorant, prejudice and bigotry say feel superior to him, and make a mockery of his stupidity; but Christian love says, educate him. If a Negro or Chinese coolie is diseased, prejudice and bigotry say isolate him in the ghetto that he may die; but Christian love says, hospitalize him."

A year or so ago a plane crashed on the runway at Philadelphia and caught fire. At the door the attractive twenty-four-year-old stewardess Mary Frances Housley took her place to help the passengers to the ground. Just as she was ready to jump, a woman on the ground screamed, "My baby, my baby!" Frankie Housley then turned into the plane to find the woman's baby. That was the last time anyone saw her alive. When the debris had cooled, they found Mary Frances' body over the four-month-old baby she had tried to rescue. When *Time* magazine ran the story, the caption under her picture read, "She could have jumped." This is precisely the alternative that faces us who live in the city, to accept or reject our responsibility as Christian neighbors. By buying our way out, by voting our way out, by using every means at our disposal, we can continue striving to keep up, to look down and to shut out. Or, like Frankie Housley, we can stoop down and lift up and help out.

Our Lord Jesus, you know, could have "jumped" — he could have run. Instead, "he steadfastly set his face toward the city," in order that all men who ever sinned might have a chance to be redeemed from their sins. Whenever Negroes are pushed into ghettos, whenever poor whites are pushed into animal coops, whenever elderly people are pushed into shame, or any other persons, whether different or similar to us, are pushed to the breaking point, we are responsible for them. We, like Cain, try to squirm out of it by saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And the Almighty answers with all the judgment of truth in his voice, "What do you think?"

THE CHANNEL

Let not my words like heedless rapids
rush by stones of truth,
Or clog in dams of self-complacency;
Nor let my thoughts lie stagnant
in backwater, scarcely heard,
But let them somewhere, sometime, Lord,
bring drifting souls to Thee.

KATHERINE L. RAMSDELL

A Plea for Pastoral Visitation

By Galen E. Hershey

As Protestant pastors we have not forsaken the role of shepherding our flocks through pastoral visitation. To some extent our success may be more impressive than we realize. A rabbi recently told me that Protestant pastors, because of the number of calls we make, have tended to force the American rabbi from the more peaceful position of scholar and teacher to the more precarious function of pastor. Having noted how often Protestant pastors visit parishioners, especially the sick, Jewish congregations are insisting that their rabbis do more visiting.

A questionnaire composed by Yale Divinity School students in a class on "Care of the Parish" was sent to 300 "successful ministers" in various denominations, who served churches averaging 700 members. Ministers responding reported an average of 34 calls weekly with 13 being on the sick list and 8 on the prospective members list. In addition to making an average of 34 calls, these pastors worked a 45-hour week in sermon preparation, reading, community concerns, meetings, counseling, recreation and correspondence, plus Sunday services. Though an average of 34 calls a week by such busy pastors seems to me an inflated figure, it at least indicates the value Protestant pastors place on visitation.

Church members, as a whole, continue to feel that pastoral visitation should have high priority on a pastor's time. Apparently few things make a layman more assured of the church's interest in him than to be able to say of the pastor, "Ye visited me." Next to inordinate behavior, the failure of a pastor to visit his people adequately still seems to bring the sharpest congregational criticism. Some laymen will deny this, even telling their pastor that he is too busy to bother visiting them. But do they mean it? Do they say the same thing to one another? I think not. "My pastor has not called" is a frequent disgruntled utterance from neglected laymen. If we do not hear this complaint from our own people, possibly it is because they are too polite to offend us.

The Too-busy Pastor

We are in part responsible for giving our people the impression that we are big, busy wheels in such a constant whirl of activity that we dare not be interrupted and do not have time to visit them. The frequency with which we must look into our little black date books before we can commit ourselves to any request may make us look like energetic, overworked executives of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand the mysterious little black book may be our defense against duty. By multiplying the list of trivial tasks and engagements, we shield ourselves from the work we ought to be doing. We are busy, it is true. But are we busy about the right things?

Because of the diverse demands a complex church and society make upon him, the pastor is tempted to relegate calling to leftover time. Meetings must be held, publications printed on time, the schedule of services maintained, programs planned, letters written, the community served. Failure to meet some of these demands and many others is too immediately conspicuous. It is easier to camouflage the failure to make enough pastoral calls in a given week than the absence of a worship bulletin on Sunday morning.

But when first things are not kept first, frustration ensues and excuses are made. Having accepted such slogans as "a housegoing pastor makes a churchgoing people" or "the end of a ministry begins with the pastoral neglect of people," our courage flags and frustration mounts as we fall behind in visitation. (And who does not?) We may rationalize our deficiency by concluding that we make more calls than we actually do; or by agreeing that pastors waste too much time and gasoline visiting people; or by thinking that after all too much of our calling is only a futile effort to gratify the layman's cry for personal attention. None of these excuses will do. Surely nothing is to be gained by the first. Granted that some calling is a waste of time, do we not waste time in far less valuable ways? And in this impersonal age is it not a service to satisfy the human cry and need for personal attention?

Efforts to strengthen the pastor's hand in visitation are in practice. In large churches the multiple ministry is a partial answer. Many churches train laymen to do visitation. Some pastors endeavor to have their people come to them with problems. Others seek to train their members to expect only crisis calls and to notify the pastor of sickness, death, prospective members and all matters needing pastoral attention. All of these efforts offer advantages but are short of the ideal. Most churches cannot afford a special minister of visitation and evangelism. Pastors who delegate responsibility to laymen will be wise to tender tasks other than visitation. Anything that separates a pastor from his people endangers his effectiveness as a preacher. For most churches neither lay visitors nor a minister of visitation is a solution to the dilemmas a pastor experiences in a complex church. It is still a matter of the pastor keeping first things first, and delegating to others the functions that are less vital to his own spiritual life and ministry.

One of our greatest and most subtle obstacles is the tendency to yield to the illusion that it is more difficult and more futile to make pastoral calls in our parish than in any other. Though some parishes present more hindrances to visitation, in every parish there are conditions that make faithful visitation a difficult and courageous task.

Population Mobility

All of us, for instance, are in some way faced with the problems that grow out of population mobility. With one out of five families in the United States moving each year, the church finds it difficult to keep up with members and newcomers. In many communities it is not unusual for several different families to have occupied the same house or apartment within a year. Some church-member families move more than once within a year. A young man walking through a trailer camp shielded his eyes with his

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Galen E. Hershey *is associate pastor of the 1400-member First Presbyterian Church of Pontiac, Michigan. After graduating from Tarkio College in Missouri and United Theological Seminary, Dayton, in 1949, Mr. Hershey served churches in Shueyville and Des Moines, Iowa, before coming to Pontiac.*

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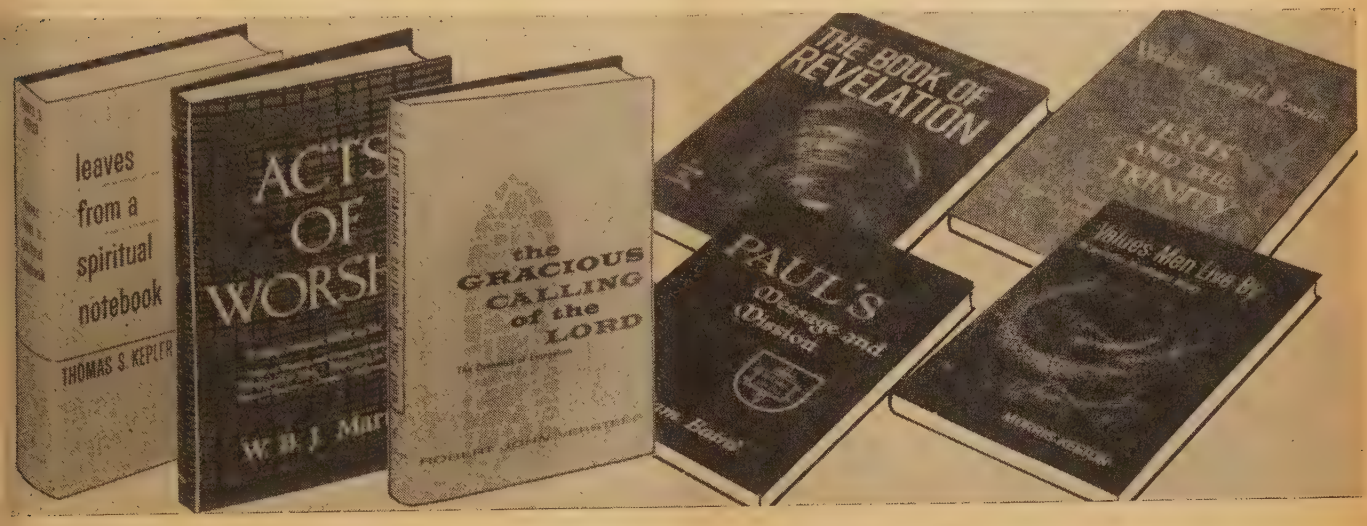

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hands. When asked by a friend why he covered his eyes, he replied, "Every time I fall in love with a girl in this place she moves within three weeks." So with the church. In many communities as fast as the church meets and falls in love with people who need her and wins them to the fold, they move. At times it seems futile to wear out the pastor and the machinery of the church running a combination "Welcome Wagon" and "Missing Persons Bureau."

Family mobility is without and within. Americans, like Gulliver in the land of the Lilliputians, are easily accused of worshiping their timepieces because they look at them so often. Families live on nervous and irregular schedules that are harrowing for a caller to interrupt. Both parents are apt to be employed; perhaps one works nights and the other days. Children belong to numerous clubs. Television programs are sacred appointments. Seldom can the entire family be called on conveniently, if at all. The account of a German pastor who called regularly on his congregation by appointment and required the whole family to be present for his visit sounds like a strange tale from an ancient land. It is. The place: rural America. The time: 25 years ago.

Discouragements to pastoral calling created by a shifting population must not defeat us. Every contact, however brief, is worthwhile. People adrift must not be lost to the church. We must go into the "highways and hedges and compel them to come in." At times we may feel like religious dispatchers, briefly receiving, then directing church members to other parishes. But the people we win to the Christian faith, nourish a while and train for service, are better prepared to serve Christ when they move to their next church. We minister to the whole church.

From pioneer days Americans have had an aversion to intruders. Ringing the doorbell of a house with a welcome mat on the front porch may bring someone to the door whose expression all but bellows "Beat it!" Numerous villages, apartment houses and office buildings carry the familiar posted warning, "No peddlars or solicitors allowed." The exploitation of the privilege of entering a home has augmented the American aversion to intruders. Perhaps the church and charitable causes have also exploited this privilege through inconsiderate and improper methods. Long, too frequent, argumentative, high-pressure calls are mistakes. The length of a pastoral call is relative. Where a ten-minute call on one dangerously ill or frantically busy might be long, an hour call under some circumstances might be a minimum. Though the tempo of life has quickened, to overstreamline visitation is perilous.

In many professions and services the need of making home calls has been almost entirely eliminated. Often this is true even in rural areas. To invite the patron to a central and well equipped place of service is the trend today. The theory, and usually the truth, behind all centralized services is that more people can be served more efficiently and as specifically. The day of door-to-door sales and services is declining.

Centralization of Services

Pastors, I think, yearn to emulate all who have succeeded in centralizing their work. We especially desire to emulate the doctor and his system. If the sick are able to, they go to the doctor's office; if not, they arrive at the hospital by ambulance. Seldom does the doctor make a house call and when he does the charge is increased. In the previously mentioned survey made of United Presbyterian pastors, though counseling ranked fifth in time spent, it was placed first in enjoyment. Part of the reason that pastors find counseling more enjoyable than calling may be due to the convenience of having the parishioner seek rather than be sought. We like to serve where we sense that we are urgently needed. A person seeking counsel, we assume, means to take our service seriously.

But, whereas the home call is not always so specific as the counseling session, nor so gratifying to our ego, it does enable us to see our people as they are where they live and to allow them to talk to us in the natural environment of their home. The pastoral call will not always prevent or discover a parishioner's spiritual desperation, quiet or otherwise. Emotional and moral problems may not be as quickly revealed as in a counseling session. But pastoral calling is a means of making the shepherd more familiar and available to his sheep and thus more natural for them to turn to when he is needed.

In making a plea for more pastoral visitation I am not implying that the mere multiplying of calls spells success. All things being equal, an increase in visits by a pastor ought to strengthen his church. A visiting pastor, however, who is a bore, a nuisance, a gossip or complainer will accomplish more by dozing in his study. We can become too aggressive and tactless in this work.

All of us can thank God and take heart that, even though civilization and the church are more complex, conveniences have also increased. If the calling burden is greater, better transportation and time-saving gadgets make it possible for us to extend the church's outreach to the scattered, the isolated, the transient. I doubt if any of us has more calling obstacles than the Parson in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales:*

> Wide was his parish, houses far asunder,
> But never did he fail, for rain or thunder,
> In sickness, or in sin, or any state,
> To visit to the farthest, small and great,
> Going afoot, and in his hand a stave.

Calling takes conviction and courage: the conviction that it is still the most valuable service a pastor can give to his Lord and church; the courage to overcome as much as possible all obstacles and personal inhibitions to the task. A pastor should know that people will heed a man they know and love. "Ye visited me" has been the turning point in the journey of many a soul. The influence of one good pastoral call is immeasurable. Visit ten persons in the hospital. Then count the host of relatives and friends who are also cheered and comforted by the presence and compassion of God's servant. As a pastor goes from home to home, sickbed to sickbed, cemetery to cemetery, with his people as their kind shepherd through joy and sorrow, he can continue to preach to them in love. "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." — John 10:5.

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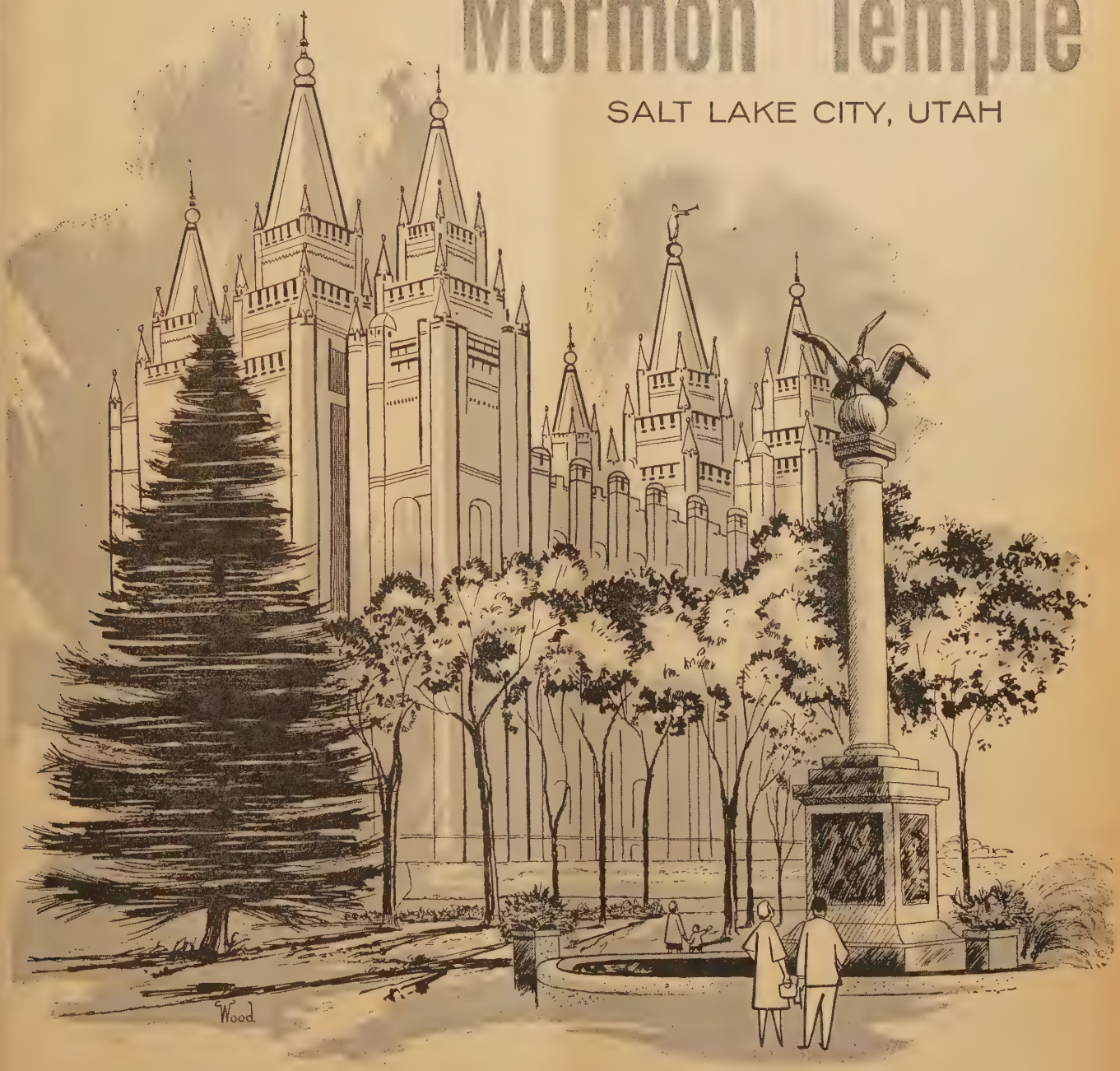

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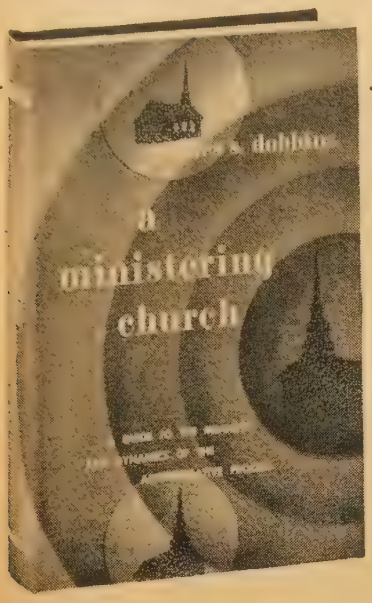

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Book Reviews

A Message to Catholics and Protestants. *By Oscar Cullmann. Eerdmans. $1.50.*

God and Man in Washington. *By Paul Blanshard. Beacon. $3.50.*

Christianity in Conflict. *A Catholic View of Protestantism. By John A. Hardon, S.J. Newman. $4.50.*

PATRIARCH Athenagoras, archbishop of Constantinople and leader of the Greek Orthodox Church, called for "not union but unity" between Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. The aging leader was reflecting on a middle eastern tour on which he was always asked, "Why are we divided?" "We have the same name, the same Lord, the same Bible, the same responsibility, the same traditions, the same destiny." In these words he seemed to wish to correct Orthodoxy's public image of intransigencé. Once again we have a symbol of yearning at least as dramatic as and more inclusive than most of those expressed by Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders.

The apparent hopelessness connected with speaking of inclusive Christian *union* in our time has led theologians to seek other terms. Somehow Christians must show that, despite differences, they love one another, are more involved with each other than with the religions or with the world. Athenagoras' distinction is of some help. Union implies "the act or instance of uniting or joining two or more things into one"; *unity* can mean "concord, harmony, conjunction." At the least we can all speak of *solidarity,* "an entire union of interests and responsibilities in a group."

Oscar Cullmann uses solidarity to express a realizable hope in the little book of great importance which grew out of a celebrated proposal made in a 1957 lecture. "History has forced the members of these two confessions, [Roman Catholic and Protestant] to live together, to work closely and to meet daily, with constant discussion with one another being the inevitable result." "Unity," says Cullmann, "is the most important characteristic of the church"; division is an absurdity, a contradiction. Sacrifices must be made toward unity and certainly for union. But in present understandings neither confession can unite without being annihilated by the other's conception of the foundation of the church itself. Meanwhile they must work "for solidarity in the situation *as it now exists,* where the unity of the *church* is not possible between Catholics and Protestants, as far as man can see. . . ."

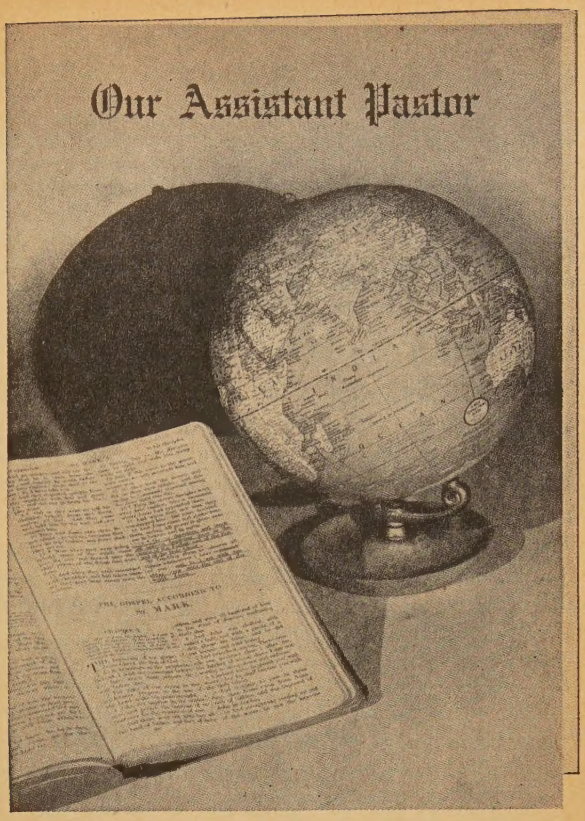
Cullmann's proposal: Annually each confession takes an offering for the poor of the other confessions in each Christian locality. The proposal is both modest and daring. But we are all too selfish to give it a chance, and so we must rationalize it away. Cullmann answers these objections. It is time for action. He notes — and is this not true? — that theologians who participate in interconfessional discussions feel a bond grow between them despite their intense awareness of differences. Cannot laymen also share in this cessation of the cold war? There is risk, indeed. But am I not somehow related to every other man in whom the spirit of Christ is somehow formed? Must this not find expression, and is not a quest for solidarity a step along the way?

Meanwhile, while Cullmann, unheeded, stings Christian consciences, we can observe how little solidarity is shown the world by American Christians in day-to-day life by reference to two books. The subtitle of one, "The Church-State Battlefront," and the title of the other, *Christianity in Conflict, A Catholic View of Protestantism* both imply belligerence. One, by Paul Blanshard, is a Protestant-secular aspect of all "sectarian" scalings of the wall of separation of church and state. It shows churches as power blocs and not at all as communities of the spirit. The other, by John A. Hardon, looks at theologies and ideologies and sees similar conflicts.

Mr. Blanshard is in the now unenviable position of having to wear a velveteen glove over a somewhat stained steel fist. His approach to sectarianism and Catholicism necessitates a rough and rugged approach. But now that he has the reputation of being America's "Number-One Anti-Catholic," he gains effect only by catching readers off guard through mildness. If he speaks as he once did he is easily dismissed: "Well, that's Blanshard." If he is gentle, in my observation, his sting is numbed and Catholics kill him with kindness; they seem to want to be associated with him, "After all, a really personable man." I believe that, taken in perspective, a figure like Blanshard is a necessary and often helpful one. He does remind us that *all* collectives, including *all* church groups, have power pretensions and self-interest at heart. As such, he is a good Protestant. But in this book as elsewhere he is essentially secular-minded: He sees hardly anything else than power in the Catholics.

Blanshard is at his best in trying to clarify the outlines of governmental functions, to strip away the fuzziness of distinction that goes with official religion, to extinguish a quasi-religious Washington Square glow. He is at his

Why Not Double Your Efforts?



Without a doubt you will agree pastoral visiting is very important; the minister who fails to take care of this vital feature is not likely to succeed. The pastoral call permits the minister to be in close contact with his parishioners; he is thus enabled to encourage, offer suggestions, use his influence toward church attendance and financial assistance, sympathize with the sick and shut-in — in fact, he sells the church and its service to the community.

The minister's success depends to a large extent upon his ability to visit the members and friends of the church often and frequently. Pastoral visiting determines to an extent his standing in the community and also the size of the audience at the public services.

Manufacturers make progress by using machinery to do their work; managers of retail concerns employ salesmen; and men who have responsible positions have their assistants. Could you not make greater progress if you had "Assistants"; something that would do part of your work for you, just as good, if not better, than you can do it? Business men are quick to take advantage of anything placed on the market to lighten their work or increase production. Are you as eager to accept help so as to make greater progress in your ministerial work?

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worst when he is attracted like a moth to another glow cast by Catholicism. If books like his keep us awake and force us to define life in a pluralistic society, they do little to help Christians express solidarity. But then, neither do books like *Christianity in Conflict*. If Blanshard is handicapped by his fundamental metaphor, the essentially static and diagrammatically naive "wall of separation," Hardon is limited by his own. A modern lay Bossuet, Hardon takes greatest delight in chronicling the fissiparousness and cataloguing the varieties of Protestantisms. Expressing some interest in fundamentalist impulses because they are nearest to Roman Catholicism, he is for the rest quite content to dismiss Protestantism's varieties.

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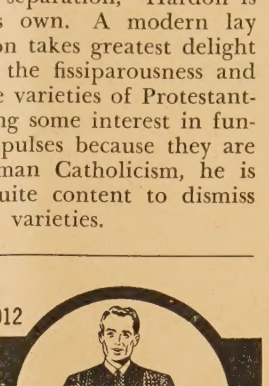

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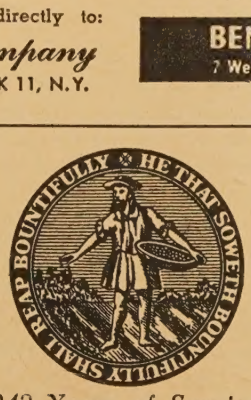

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I recall his earlier, quite fair-minded and largely factual study, *The Protestant Churches of America*. His new stance transforms him from cataloguer to appraiser. Like Blanshard, Hardon finds a fruitful place as dispeller of illusions and opponent of glossed-over differences. But I can now sympathize with Catholic complaints after Protestants write of them from without. Hardon simply does not understand the Protestant heart's reasons even when his reason knows. Blame Protestantism if you wish for the complexity of its image. That does not excuse the book's anti-empathies and antipathies. If there are as many inaccuracies in dealing with all denominations as there are with my own and those I know best, I can't commend it to anyone seeking a representative portrait of non-Roman Catholic groups.

If Hardon failed in a noble attempt no one would complain. But he hardly seems to have tried. He is wrong on Luther's criterion for canonicity; he is unfair when he says "self-validation of faith is a euphemism for denying the supernatural order." Luther never believed in a "purely invisible church" in order to reject Rome — we might say he believed in a purely visible church, a flock, a congregation, a fellowship of saints. "Mutilation," "perversion," — these are the charges that fall most frequently. If Blanshard cares most about power and little about theology, Hardon saves his invective for theological discussion, while power religions are dealt with more irenically. How tragic that books which set out to understand and reconcile contribute to misunderstanding and disunity. *M.E.M.*

THE BIBLE SPEAKS. *By Robert Davidson. Crowell. $3.95.*

THE jacket claims that this book is "A Guide to the Thought of the Bible and to an Understanding of Its Major Themes." This is a claim well justified, for the author, who is lecturer in biblical study at the University of Aberdeen, succeeded in writing a readable, useful and profound guide to the Scriptures. He rightly emphasizes that the Bible is concerned with the story of the encounter of God and man in history. God's actions directed by his saving will, righteousness and justice occupy the central place in the Scriptures. The continuity of the Old and New Testaments is apparent in Christ's fulfilling Israel's hope and in the church as God's new people, the heirs to the ultimate hope of the redemption of all mankind. Extensive quotations from the Bible help to qualify this book as a primer for both private and group Bible study. Yet at any stage of Bible study it could equally well serve both layman and minister as a clear and persuasive presentation of the main themes of the Bible. — *Stephen Szikszai, Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Me.*

THE TRADING POST

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While glancing at a book ad appear- g in a magazine, I read the follow- g into the title of the book: *God's olony in a Mad World;* the actual le was *God's Colony in Man's orld,* but the former afforded me ith a good topic for a sermon on e church. — *Rev. Francis E. Houch- n, Alma, Neb.*

•

he Scandal of Christianity:
The Cross: because it was a deed.
The Cross: because it was a deed of commitment.
The Cross: because it was a sacrificial deed of commitment.

•

n Aspect of Dedication:
Some lives, like the Nile river, disin- egrate in their last years, turn into nany rivulets, sink into marshes and ands, and disappear in many direc- ions. Some, like the Amazon, absorb- ng all that comes to them, plow a leep channel into the unknown sea oward which they flow.

Pulpit Calendar

Sept. 4 — Labor Sunday.
Sept. 5 — Labor Day.
Sept. 11 — 14th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 18 — 15th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 25 — 16th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 25 — Oct. 2 — Christian Education Week.
Oct. 2 — World-Wide Communion.
Oct. 9 — 18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 16 — Laymen's Sunday.
Oct. 23 — World Order Sunday.
Oct. 30 — Reformation Sunday.
Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.
Nov. 1 — All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2 — All Souls' Day.
Nov. 6 — 22nd Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 13 — Stewardship Day.
Nov. 20 — Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 24 — Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 27 — 1st Sunday in Advent.

How to resist temptation, according to Joseph:
Call the evil thing by its evil name.
Act immediately on the spontaneous sense of revulsion.
Remember the responsibility of human relationships.
Remember that all sin is sin against God.

•

Quotes Waiting to Be Quoted:
"While reason is puzzling herself about the mystery, faith is turning it into her daily bread and feeding on it in her heart of hearts." — F. D. Huntington

"Don't trust children with edged tools. Don't trust man, great God, with more power than he has, until he has learned to use that little better." — Emerson

"Most men live their lives in regions entirely below the neck which is also the place where the rest of the animals live . . . The things that make men men spring from tissues situated above the neck." — Martin Fischer

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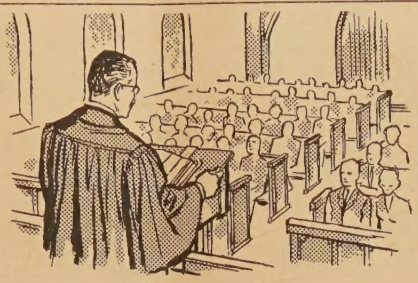

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